THE

# WANDERER;

OR,

## *FEMALE DIFFICULTIES.*

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

EVELINA; CECILIA; AND CAMILLA.

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IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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THE

# WANDERER.

## BOOK VII.

### CHAPTER LX.

JULIET was precipitately followed by Lord Melbury.

"It is not, then," he cried, "your intention to return to Mrs. Ireton?"

"No, my lord, never!"

She had but just uttered these words, when, immediately facing her, she beheld Mrs. Howel.

A spectre could not have made her start more affrighted, could not have appeared to her more horrible. And Lord Melbury, who earnestly, at the same moment, had pronounced, "Tell me

whither, then,—" stopping abruptly, looked confounded.

"May I ask your lordship to take me to Lady Aurora?" Mrs. Howel coldly demanded.

"Aurora?—Yes;—she is there, Ma'am;—still in the gallery."

Mrs. Howel presented him her hand, palpably to force him on with her; and stalked past Juliet, without any other demonstration of perceiving her than what was unavoidably manifested by an heightened air of haughty disdain.

Lord Melbury, distressed, would still have hung back; but Mrs. Howel, taking his arm, proceeded, as if without observing his repugnance.

Juliet, in trembling dismay, glided on till she entered a vacant apartment, of which the door was open. To avoid intrusion, she was shutting herself in; but, upon some one's applying, nearly the next minute, for admittance, the fear of new misconstruction forced her to open the door. What, then,

was her shock at again viewing Mrs. Howel! She started back involuntarily, and her countenance depicted undisguised horrour.

With a brow of almost petrifying severity, sternly fixing her eyes upon Juliet, Mrs. Howel, for a dreadful moment, seemed internally suspended, not between hardness and mercy, but between accusation and punishment. At length, in a tone, from the deep sounds of which Juliet shrunk, but had no means to retire, she slowly pronounced, while her head rose more loftily at every word, "You abscond from Mrs. Ireton, though she would permit you to remain with her? 'Tis to Lord Melbury that you reveal your purpose; and the inexperienced youth whom you would seduce, is the only person that can fail to discover your ultimate design, in taking the moment of meeting with him, for quitting the honourable protection which snatches you from want, if not from disgrace: at the same time that it offers security to a noble

family, justly alarmed for the morals, if not for the honour of its youthful and credulous chief."

The terrour which, in shaking the nerves, seemed to have clouded even the faculties of Juliet, now suddenly subsided, superseded by yet more potent sensations of quick resentment. "Hold, Madam!" she cried: "I may bear with cruelty and injustice, for I am helpless! but not with insult, for I am innocent!"

Mrs. Howel, surprised, paused an instant; but then harshly went on, "This cant, young woman, can only delude those who are ignorant of the world. Whatever you may chuse to utter to me of that sort will be perfectly null. What I have to say is simple; what you have to offer must, of course, be complicate. But I have no time to throw away upon rants and rodomontades, and I have no patience to waste upon impostors. Hear me then without reply."

"Not to reply, Madam, will cost me

little," indignantly cried Juliet: "but to hear you,—pardon me, Madam,—force only can exact from me so dreadful a compliance."

She looked round, but not having courage to open a further door, nor power to pass by Mrs. Howel, walked to a window.

Not heeding her resistance, and disdaining her emotion, Mrs. Howel continued: "My Lord Melbury is not, it is true, like his sister, under my immediate care; but he is here only to join her ladyship, whom my Lord Denmeath has entrusted to my protection. And, therefore, though he is as noble in mind as in rank, since he is still, in years, but a boy, I must, in honour, consider myself to be equally responsible to my Lord Denmeath for the brother as for the sister. This being the case, I must not leave him to the machinations of an adventurer. In two words, therefore,—Declare yourself for what you are; or return with Mrs. Ireton to Brighthelm-

stone, and remain under her roof, since she deigns to permit it, till I have restored my young friends, safe and uninjured, to their uncle. Otherwise——"

Juliet, casting up her eyes, as if calling upon heaven for patience, would have opened the window, to seek refuge in the air from sounds of which the shock was insupportable: but Mrs. Howel, offended into yet deeper wrath, advanced with a mien of such rigid austerity, that she lost her purpose in her consternation, and listened irresistibly to what follows: "Otherwise,—mark me, young woman! the still unexplained mystery with which you have made your way into the kingdom, will authorise an application which you will vainly try to elude, and with which you will not dare to prevaricate. You will take your choice, and, in five minutes, you will be summoned to make it known."

With this menace she left the room.

In an agony of terrour, that again ab-

sorbed even resentment, Juliet remained motionless, confounded, and incapable of deliberation, till the groom of Mrs. Ireton came to inform her that his lady was ready to set out.

Juliet, scarcely herself knowing her own intentions, precipitately ejaculated, "The crisis is arrived!—I must cast myself upon Lady Aurora!"

The servant said he did not understand her.

"Tell Lady Aurora—;" she cried, "or Lord Melbury,—no, Lady Aurora,—" she stopt, fearfully balancing upon which to fix.

The groom asked what he was to say.

"You will say,—I must beg you to say,—" cried Juliet, endeavouring to recollect herself, "that I desire,—that I wish,—that I take the liberty to request that Lady Aurora will have the goodness to honour me,—that I shall be eternally obliged if her ladyship will honour me with a few moment's conversation!"

The groom went; and almost the next instant, she heard the fleet step of Lady Aurora approaching, and her soft voice, with unusual emphasis, pronounce, " Pardon me, dear Madam, but I could not refuse her for a thousand worlds!"

" She ought not to refuse her, Mrs. Howel!" added, with fervency, the voice of Lord Melbury; " in humanity, in justice, in decency, Aurora ought not to refuse her! Whatever may be your fears or objections to an intimacy, there can be none to common civility; for though we know not what Miss Ellis has been, we see what she now is;—a pattern of elegance, sweetness, and delicacy."

" A moment, my lord!—one moment, Lady Aurora!" answered Mrs. Howel; " we may be overheard here;—honour me with a moment's attention in another room." She seemed drawing them away, and not a word more reached Juliet.

A dreadful ten minutes preceded any

farther information: a quick step, then, followed by a tap at the door, re-awakened at once terrour and hope. She awaited, motionless, its opening, but then saw neither the object she desired, nor that which she dreaded; neither Lady Aurora nor Mrs. Howel, but Lord Melbury.

Affrighted by the threatened vengeance of Mrs. Howel, but irresistibly charmed by his generous defence, and trusting esteem, Juliet looked so disturbed, yet through her disturbance so gratified, that Lord Melbury, evidently much agitated himself, approached her with a vivacity of pleasure that he did not seek to repress, and could not have disguised.

"Miss Ellis will, I am sure, forgive my intrusion," he cried, "when I tell her that it is made in the name of my sister. Aurora is grieved past all expression not to wait upon you herself; but Mrs. Howel is in such haste to depart, from her fear of travelling after sun-set,

that it is not possible to detain her. Poor Aurora sends you a thousand apologies, and entreats you not to think ill of her for appearing thus unfeeling —"

"Think ill of Lady Aurora?" interrupted Juliet, "I think her an angel! —"

"She is very near it, indeed!" cried Lord Melbury, ardently; "as near it, I own, as I wish her; for I don't see, without wings, and flying up to heaven, how she can well be nearer! However, since you are so kind, so liberal, as to do her that justice, would it be possible that you could communicate, through me, what you had the goodness to intend saying to her? She is quite broken-hearted at going away with an appearance of such unkindness. Can you give her this consolation?"

"Oh, my lord!" answered Juliet, with an energy that shewed her off all guard, "if I might hope for Lady

Aurora's support—for your lordship's protection,—with what transport would my o'er-burthened heart,—" Seized with sudden dread of Mrs. Howel, she stopt abruptly, and fearfully looked around.

Enchanted by a prospect of some communication, Lord Melbury warmly exclaimed, " Miss Ellis, I swear to you, by all that I hold most sacred, that if you will do me so great an honour as to trust me to be the bearer of your confidence to my sister, no creature upon earth, besides, shall ever, without your permission, hear what you may unfold! and it ſhall be my whole study to merit your good opinion, and to shew you my respect."

" O my lord! O Lord Melbury," cried Juliet, " what hopes, what sweet balsamic hopes you pour into my wounded bosom! after sufferings by which I have been nearly,—nay, through which I have even wished myself demolished!—"

Lord Melbury, inexpressibly touched,

eagerly, yet tenderly, answered, "Name, name what there is I can be so happy as to do! Your wishes shall be my entire direction. And if I can offer you any services, I shall console Aurora, and, permit me to say, myself, still more than you."

"I will venture, then, my lord, — I must venture! — to lay open my perilous situation! — And yet I may put your feelings, — alas! — to a test, — alas, my lord! — that not all your virtues, nor even your compassion may withstand!"

Trembling almost as violently as she trembled herself, from impatience, from curiosity, from charmed interest, and indescribable wonder, Lord Melbury bent forward, so irresistibly and so palpably to take her hand, that Juliet, alarmed, drew back; and, calling forth the self-command of which her sorrows, her terrours, and her hopes had conjointly bereft her, "If I have been guilty," she cried, "of any indiscretion, my lord, in this hasty, almost involun-

tary disposition to confidence, — excuse, — and do not punish an errour that has its source only in a — perhaps — too high wrought esteem! —"

Starting with a look nearly of horrour, "You kill me," he cried, "Miss Ellis, if you suspect me to be capable, a second time, of dishonouring the purest of sisters by forgetting the respect due to her friend! —"

"No, my lord, no!" warmly interrupted Juliet; "whatever you think dishonourable I am persuaded your lordship would find impracticable: but the stake is so great, — the risk so tremendous, — and failure would be so fatal! —"

Her preturbation now became nearly overpowering; and, notwithstanding she was prepared, and resolved, to disclose herself, her ability seemed unequal to her will, and her breast heaved with sighs so oppressive, that though she frequently began with — "I will now, — I must now, —" she strove vainly to finish her sentence.

After anxiously and with astonishment waiting some minutes, "Why does Miss Ellis thus hesitate?" cried Lord Melbury. "What can I say or do to remove her scruples?"

"I have none, my lord, none! but I have so solemnly been bound to silence! and . ."

"Oh, but you are bound, now, to speech!" cried he, with spirit; "and, to lessen your inquietude, and satisfy your delicacy, I will shew you the way to openness and confidence, by making a disclosure first. Will you, then, have more reliance upon my discretion?"

"You are too, — too good, my lord!" cried Juliet, again brightening up; "but I dream not of such indulgence: 'tis to your benevolence only I apply."

"Oh, but I have a fancy to trust you! Aurora will be delighted that I should have found such a confidant. Yet I have nothing positive,—nothing fixed,— to say, it is but an idea, — a thought, — a kind of distant perspective . . . "

He coloured, and looked embarrassed, yet evidently with feelings of pleasure.

A radiant smile now illumined the face of Juliet, "Ah! my lord," she cried, "if I might utter a conjecture,—I had almost said a wish—."

"Why not? cried he, laughing."

"Your lordship permits me?—Well then, let me name—Lady Barbara Frankland?—"

"Is it possible?" cried he, while the blood mantled in his cheeks, and pleasure sparkled in his eyes; "what can have led you to such a thought? How can you possibly have suspected... She is still so nearly a child...."

"It is true, my lord, but, also, how amiable a child! how richly endowed with similar qualities to those which, at this instant, engage my gratitude!—"

He bowed, with smiling delight. "I will not deny," he cried, "that you have penetrated into my secret; though as yet, in fact, it is hardly even a secret; for we have not,—hitherto,—you will

easily believe, conversed together upon the subject! Nor shall we say a word about it, together, till I have made the tour. But I will frankly own, that we [h]ave been brought up from our very [c]radles, with this notion, mutually. It [w]as the wish of my father even in our [in]fancy.—"

"Hold it then sacred!" cried Juliet, with strong emotion. "Happy, thrice happy, in such a wish for your guide!"

She burst into tears.

"How your sorrows," said he, tenderly, "affect me! and how they interest me more deeply every moment! Tell me, then, sweet Miss Ellis!—amiable friend of my sister!—tell me why you are thus afflicted? and how, and in what manner, there is the least possibility that I may offer you my services, or procure you any consolation?"

The door here was abruptly opened by Mrs. Howel.

Red with constrained rage, yet assuming a courteous demeanour, "Your lord-

ship will pardon, she cried, "my intrusion;" but Lady Aurora is so delicate, that I am always uneasy at keeping her ladyship out late."

Highly provoked, yet deeply confused, Lord Melbury stammered that he was extremely sorry to have detained them, and begged that they would set out; promising to follow immediately.

Civilly smiling, though fixing her eyes upon his face in a manner that doubled his embarrassment, she entreated him to use his own influence with Lady Aurora, to prevail upon her ladyship to proceed.

Too much perturbed to resist, he ran out of the room; casting a glance at Juliet, as he passed, expressive of his chagrin at this interruption, and full of sensibility and respect.

Juliet dreadfully affrighted, and utterly confounded, had hid her streaming eyes, and conscious blushes, with her handkerchief, upon the entrance of Mrs. Howel; but, when [illegible] alone with that

tremendous lady, mingled terrour and indignation would have urged immediate flight, had she not been apprehensive of seeming to follow, and clandestinely, Lord Melbury.

Benign had been as yet the countenance, and melody itself the voice of Mrs. Howel, compared with the expression of the one, or the sound of the other, while she now pronounced the following words: "The terms, young woman, that I would keep with a person of name and character; the honour and delicacy due to myself in any intercourse with such a one, I set wholly aside in treating with an adventurer. I know all that has passed! I have heard every syllable! Convinced, therefore, of your deep laid scheme, to captivate to his disgrace a youth of an illustrious house, by revealing to him a pretended tale, which you craftily refuse to trust to all who may better judge, or try, its truth; I shall take, without delay, such measures as it beho[illegible]hould be taken, by a friend of his [illegible]d of himself, to

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for the immediate accomplishment of so delicious a scheme.

Cheered by a hope so dear to her wishes, so promising to her happiness, Juliet, now, was perfectly contented to continue at Brighthelmstone, till she should receive an answer to her proposal.

But, before its arrival was yet possible, she was called to a messenger, who would deliver his commission only to herself.

She descended, not without perturbation, into the hall; where a countryman told her, that he had been ordered to beg that she would go, at the usual time, the next morning, to the usual place, to meet her old friend.

He was then walking off; but Juliet stopt him, to demand whence he came, and who sent him.

A lady, he answered, who spoke broken English, and who had named five of the clock in the morning.

"Oh yes! Oh yes!" cried Juliet:

"I will not fail!" whilst a soft murmur finished with 'Tis herself!—'tis my Gabriella!

What brought her back to Brighthelmstone, now occupied all the thoughts of her friend. Was it a design to fix her abode where her maternal enthusiasm might daily be cherished by visiting the grave of her child? Or, was it for the single indulgence of bathing that melancholy spot once more with her tears?

It was already night, or Juliet would have sought to anticipate the meeting, by some enquiry at their former lodgings: the morning, however, soon arrived, and, nearly with its dawn, she arose, and, by a previous arrangement made with the gardener, quitted the house, to hasten to the church-yard upon the hill.

In her way thither, she was seized, from time to time, with something like an apprehension that she was pursued; for, though no one came in sight, the stillness of the early morning enabled

her to hear, distinctly, a footstep that now seemed to follow her own, now to stop till she had proceeded some yards.

It might merely be some workman;—yet would not a workman overtake her, and pass on? It was more probably some traveller. Nevertheless, she would not ascend the hill without making some examination; and, casting a hasty glance behind her, she perceived a tall man, muffled up, whose air denoted him to be a gentleman; but who instantly hung back.

A thousand anxious doubts were now awakened. Was it possible that she had been summoned upon any false pretence? Gabriella had not written; and though that omission had, at first, appeared the natural result of haste upon her arrival; joined to the difficulty of immediately procuring writing implements, it left an opening to uncertainty upon reflection, by no means satisfactory. That she should not personally have presented herself at the house of Mrs. Ireton,

could excite no surprize, for she well knew that Juliet had neither time nor a room at her own command; and to revisit the grave of her child had always been the purpose of Gabriella.

With a slackened and irresolute step, she now went on, till, wistfully looking towards the church-yard, she descried a female, with arms uplifted, that seemed inviting her approach. Relieved and delighted, she then quickened her pace; though, as she advanced, the form retreated, till, gradually, it was wholly out of sight.

This affected and saddened her. The little grave was on the other side of the church. It is there, then, only, she cried, there, where our melancholy meeting took place, that my ever wretched Gabriella will suffer me to rejoin her!

With an aching heart she proceeded, though no Gabriella came forward to give her welcome; but when, upon crossing over to the other side of the church, in full sight of the little grave,

no Gabriella was there; and not a human being was visible, she felt again impressed with a fear of imposition, and was turning back to hurry home; when she observed, just mounting the hill, the person by whose pursuit she had already been startled.

Terrour now began to take possession of her mind. She had surely been deluded, and she was evidently followed. She had neither time nor composure for divining why; but she was instantly certain that she could be no object for premeditated robbery; and the unprincipled Sir Lyell Sycamore alone occurred to her, as capable of so cruel a stratagem to enveigle her to a lonely spot. The height of the man was similar: his face was carefully concealed; but, transient as had been her glance, it was obvious to her that he was no labourer, nor countryman.

To descend the hill, would be to meet him: to go on yet further, when not a cottage, perhaps, might be open,

would almost seem to expect being overtaken: yet to remain and await him, was out of all question. She saw, therefore, no hope of security, but by endeavouring to regain the street, through a circuitous path, by sudden rapidity of flight.

But, upon gliding, with this design, to the other side of the church, she was struck with amazement to see that the church-door was ajar; and to perceive, at the same instant, a passing shadow, reflected through a window, of some one within the building.

Was this accident? or had it any connection with the tall unknown who followed her?

Filled with wonder and alarm, though a stranger to every species of superstition, her feet staggered, and her presence of mind threatened to play her false; when again a fleeting shadow, of she knew not whom nor what, gleamed athwart a monument.

Summoning now her utmost force,

though shaking with nameless apprehensions, she crossed, with celerity, a grave-stone, to gain what appeared to be the quickest route for descending; when the sound of a hasty step, immediately behind her, gave her the fearful intelligence that escape was impossible.

Nevertheless, though nearly overcome with dread, she was pressing on; but some one, rushing abruptly past her, and turning short round, stopt her passage.

Horrour thrilled through her every vein, in the persuasion that she was the destined victim of deliberate delusion, when the words, "It is, indeed, then, you!" uttered in an accent of astonishment, yet with softness, made her hastily raise her eyes,—and raise them upon Harleigh.

Bereft of prudence, in the suddenness of her joy; forgetting self-command, and casting off all guard, all reserve, she rapturously held out to him her willing hands, exclaiming, "Oh, Mr.

Harleigh! — are you, then, my destined protector? — my guardian angel?"

Speechless from transported surprize, Harleigh pressed to his lips and to his heart each unresisting hand; while Juliet, whose eyes beamed lustrous with buoyant felicity, was unconscious of the happiness that she bestowed, from the absorption of the delight that she experienced.

"Precious, for ever precious moment!" cried Harleigh, when the power of utterance returned; "Here, on this spot, where first the tortures of the most deadly suspense give way to the most exquisite hopes, —"

The countenance of Juliet now again underwent a change the most sudden; its brilliancy was overclouded; its smiles vanished; its joy died away; not, indeed, to return to its look of horrour and affright, but to convey an expression of the deepest shame and regret; and, with cheeks tingling with burning blushes, she strove to re-

gain her hands; to recover her composure; and to account to him, by relating what had been her dread, and her mistake, for her flattering reception.

But she strove in vain: her efforts to disengage herself had no more that frozen severity which Harleigh had not dared resist; and though her earnestness and distress shewed their sincerity, her varying blushes, her inability to find words, and her uncontroulable emotion, demonstrated, to his quick perception, that to govern her own conflicting feelings, at this critical moment, was as difficult as to resume over his her accustomed dominion.

"Here on this spot," he continued, "this blessed, sacred, hallowed spot! clear, and eternally dismiss, every torturing doubt by which I have so long been martyrized! Here let all baneful mystery, all heart-wounding distrust, be for ever exiled; and here—"

A faint, but earnest, "Oh no! no! no!" now quivered from the lips of

Juliet; but Harleigh would not be silenced.

"And here, where you have condescended to call me your protector,—your destined protector!—a title which gives me claims that never while I live shall be relinquished!—claims which not even yourself, now, can have power to recall—"

"Hear me! hear me!—" interrupted, but vainly, the pleading Juliet; Harleigh, uncontrouled, went on.

"Initiate me, without delay, in the duties of my office. Against whom, and against what may I be your protector? You have called me, too, your guardian-angel; Oh suffer me to call you mine! Consent to that sweet reciprocation, which blends felicity with every care of life! which animates our virtues by our happiness! which secures the performance of every duty, by making every duty an enjoyment!"

A frequent "Alas! alas!" was all that Juliet could gain time to utter,

from the rapid energy with which Harleigh overpowered all attempt at remonstrance.

"Why, why," he then cried, with redoubled vivacity; "why not exile now, and repudiate for ever, that terrible rigour of reserve that has so long been at war with your humanity?—Listen to your softer self! It will plead, it will surely plead for gentler measures!"

"Oh no, no, no!" reiterated the agitated Juliet, with a vehemence that would have startled, if not discouraged him, had not another incautious "Alas! alas!" stole its way into the midst of her tremulous negatives; and revealed that her heart, her wishes, her feelings, bore no part in the refusals which her tongue pronounced.

This was not a circumstance to escape Harleigh, who, indescribably touched, fervently exclaimed, "And what, now, shall sunder us? Pardon my presumption if I say us! What is the power,—the

earthly power, — while yet I live, and breathe, and feel, that can now compel me to give up the rights with which, from this decisive moment, I hold myself invested? No! our destinies are indissolubly united! — All procrastination, — all concealment must be over! They would now be literally distracting. Why, then, that start? — Why that look? — Can you regret having shewn a little feeling? — a trait of sensibility? — O put a period to this unequalled, unexampled mystery! I am yours! faithfully, honourably yours! Yours to the end of my mortal existence; yours, by my most sacred hopes, far, far longer! — You weep? — not from grief, I trust, — I hope, — not from grief flow those touching tears? Open to me your situation, — your heart! Here, on this sacred, and henceforth happiest spot, where first you have accorded me a ray of hope, let our mutual vows be plighted to all eternity!"

Juliet, whose whole soul seemed dis-

solved in poignant yet tender distress, cast up to heaven, as if imploring for aid, her irresistibly streaming eyes; when, caught by some shadowy motion to turn them towards the church, she fancied that she beheld again the female, whose appearance and vanishing had been forgotten from the excess of her own emotions.

Startled, she looked more earnestly, and then clearly perceived, though half hidden behind a monument, a form in white; whose dress appeared to be made in the shape, and of the materials, used for our last mortal covering, a shroud. A veil of the same stuff fell over the face of the figure, of which the hands hung down strait at each lank side.

Struck with awe and consternation, Juliet involuntarily ceased her struggles for freedom; and Harleigh, who saw her strangely moved, pursuing the direction of her eyes, discerned the object by which they had been caught; who now, slowly raising her right hand, waved

to them to follow; while, with her left, she pointed to the church, and, uttering a wild shriek, flitted out of sight.

Could it be Elinor? Each felt at the same instant the same terrible apprehension. Harleigh sprang after her; Juliet, almost petrified with affright, was immovable.

The fugitive entered the church, and darted towards the altar; where she threw her left hand over a tablet of white stone, cut in the shape of a coffin, with the action of embracing it; yet in a position to leave evident the following inscription:

"This Stone
Is destined by herself to be the last kind covering
of all that remains of
ELINOR JODDREL:
Who, sick of Life, of Love, and of Despair,
Dies to moulder, and be forgotten."

Casting off her veil when she perceived Harleigh, "Here! Harleigh, here!" she cried, in a tone authoritative, though tremulous, "'tis here you must reciprocate your vows! Here is

the spot! Here stands the altar for the happy;—here, the tomb for the hopeless!"

Suspicious of some sinister purpose, Harleigh was at her side with the swiftness of lightening; but not till her fingers were upon the trigger of a pistol, which she had pointed to her temple; though in time, by attaining her arm, and forcibly giving it a new direction, to make her fire the deadly weapon in the air.

Her own design, nevertheless, seconded by the loud din of a pistol, so close to her ear, and let off by her own hand, operated upon her deranged imagination with a belief that her purpose was fulfilled; and she sunk upon the ground, uttering, with a deep groan, "Oh Harleigh! bless the dying Elinor,—and be happy!—"

Harleigh, terrified and shocked, though thankfully perceiving her mistake, dropped down at her side, and supported her head; while his congra-

tulating eyes stole a glance at Juliet; who, at the sound of the pistol, had hastened, aghast, to the spot; but who now, dreading to be seen, retreated.

"Oh Elinor!" he then cried, "what direful infatuation of wrong is this!—What have you done with your nobler, better self?—How have you thus warped your reason and your religion alike, to an equal and terrible defiance of here and hereafter?"

Recovering, at these interrogatories, to conscious failure, and conscious existence, she hastily arose, indignantly spurned at the tablet, looked around for Juliet with every mark of irritation, and, casting a glance of suffering, yet investigating shame at Harleigh, "'Tis again, then," she cried, "abortive!—and, a third time, I am food, for fools,—when I meant to be food only for worms!"

She then peremptorily demanded Juliet; who, affrighted, was absconding, till shrieks rather than calls forced her forward.

With an exaltation so violent that it seemed incipient frenzy, Elinor hailed her. "Approach, Ellis, approach!" she cried. "Oh chosen of the chosen! Oh born to shew, and prove the perfectibility of earthly happiness, and the falsehood and sophistry of the ignorance and superstition that deny it! Approach! and let me sanction your nuptial contract! I here solemnly give you back your promise. I renounce all tie over your actions, your engagements, your choice. Approach, then, that I may join your hands, while I quaff my last draught of tender poison from the grateful eyes of Harleigh, whose happiness,—my own donation!—will cast a glory upon my exit!"

Juliet stood motionless, pale, almost livid, and appearing nearly as unable to think as to speak. But the feelings of Harleigh were as much too actively alive, as her's seemed morbid. Agitation beat in every pulse, flowed in every vein, throbbed even visibly in his heart,

which bounded with tumultuous triumph, that Juliet, now, was liberated from all adverse engagements: and though he sought, and meant, to turn his eyes, with tender pity, upon Elinor, they stole involuntarily, impulsively, glances of extatic felicity at the mute and appalled Juliet.

The watchful Elinor discerned the distraction, which he imagined to be as impenetrable as it was irresistible. Shame, mingled with despondence, superseded her exaltation; and disdainfully, and even wrathfully, she disengaged herself from his hold; but, suspicious of some new violence, he hovered over her with extended arms; and presently caught a glimpse of a second pistol, placed behind the tablet, and, as nearly as possible, out of sight. Her intention could not be doubted; but, forcibly anticipating her movement, he seized the destined instrument of death, and, flying to the porch, fired it also into the air.

Elinor now was confounded; she reddened with confusion, trembled with ire, and seemed nearly fainting with excess of emotion; but, after holding her hands a minute or two crossed over her face, she forced a smile, and said, "Harleigh, our tragi-comedy has a long last act! But you can never, now, believe me dead, till you see me buried. That, next, must follow!" And abruptly she was rushing out of the church, when she was encountered, in the porch, by her foreign servant, accompanied by the whole house of Mrs. Maple.

Juliet, satisfied that this victim to her own passions and delusions, would now fall into proper hands, eagerly glided past them all; and, finding the streets no longer empty, fled back to the mansion of Mrs. Ireton.

## CHAPTER LXII.

JULIET re-entered her chamber without having been missed, but in a perturbation of mind indescribable; affrighted, confused, overpowered with various and varying sensations; wretched for Elinor; dissatisfied with herself; and yet more at war with what seemed to be her destiny; ejaculating, from time to time, Oh Gabriella! receive, console, strengthen, and direct your terrified,—bewildered friend!—

Unusual sounds from the hall soon announced some disturbance; but, wholly without courage to go forth upon any enquiry, she remained, in trembling ignorance of what was passing; till she was relieved by a visit from Selina, which gave her the extreme satisfaction of hearing that Elinor was actually in the house.

Grief, however, though unmixt with surprize, followed the information, when she heard, also, that Elinor was in so disordered a state, that she had been forced from the church only by the interference of Mr. Naird; for whom Mr. Harleigh had sent; and who had positively told her, that, if she would not submit to be conveyed to some house, and try to repose, he should hold it his duty to send for proper persons to controul and take care of her, as one unfit to be trusted to herself.

Even then, though evidently startled, she would not consent to go back to Lewes, which she had quitted, she loudly declared, for ever: but, after wildly enquiring for Ellis, and being assured that she was returned to Mrs. Ireton's, she was, at length, wrought upon to accept an invitation, which, through measures that were taken by the active Harleigh, Mrs. Ireton had been prevailed with to send to her; and which included her sister and Mrs. Maple.

What else of the history of this transaction was known to Selina, was speedily revealed.

The whole house of Mrs. Maple had been awakened at daylight, by the foreign servant of Elinor; who came to bid Tomlinson call up Mrs. Maple, and acquaint her, that he believed that her neice was determined to make away with herself. She had found means, he said, over night, to induce the clerk of the church at Brighthelmstone to let her have the key of the church, to begin a drawing, of one of the monuments, at sunrise, when no idle loungers would interrupt her: and the clerk, knowing her for a lady of property and fashion, in the neighbourhood, had not had the thought to refuse her. She had made him, the lackey, come for her at Mrs. Maple's, with a post chaise, and wait near the house at three o'clock in the morning: she and Mrs. Golding then got into it, while he attended, as usual, on horseback. They stopt at a place, by

the way, to receive a heap of things, that he did not take much notice of, as it was not well light; and then they all gallopped to Brighthelmstone. He thought no harm, all the time, as his lady so often went about oddly, nobody knowing why. She made the chaise stop at the church-yard, and told him, and Golding, to help up with all the things, into the church. She then said she was going to begin her drawing; and bid the postilion wait at some inn, till she sent for him. But she told the lackey to stay in the church-yard. She and Golding were then shut up together a quarter of an hour; when Golding came out, crying. Her lady, she said, had put a white trimmed stuff dress over her cloaths, that made her look as if she were buried alive, and just the same as a ghost; and she was afraid all was not right; for she had made her help to place what she had called a pallet, for her drawing, upon the altar-table, and it looked just like a coffin; only it was

covered over with paper. She had ordered that they should both go to an inn, and return for her, with the chaise, at eight o'clock. Neither of them knew what to make of all this; but so many out of the way things had passed, and nothing had come of them, that, still, they should have done only as they were bid, but that the lackey recollected two loaded pistols, which his lady had made him charge, upon the route, to frighten away robbers, by firing one of them off, she said, if they saw any suspicious persons dodging them: and these, which had been put carefully into the chaise, Golding had seen, in the hand of her mistress, in the church. This gave him such a panic, that he thought it safest to ride back to Madame Maple's, and tell the whole at once. All the family, upon this alarming news, set out for Brighthelmstone, the moment that the horses could be got ready: and, just as they arrived at the church, Elinor herself, had appeared, bursting from it into the porch.

Her indignation at thus being followed and detected, had been terrible: Who, she asked, had any right to controul her? But that was nothing to her disturbance, when she found that Ellis had vanished. She grew so agitated, that is was frightful, Selina continued, to see her; and looked franticly about her, as if for means to destroy herself: and nothing could urge her to quit the church, or church-yard, whence she eagerly tried to command away all others; till Mr. Harleigh had recourse to Mr. Naird, who had alarmed her into submission. They had then brought her in a chaise, between Mrs. Maple and the surgeon, to Mrs. Ireton's; where, to hide herself, she said, from light and life, she had gloomily consented to go to bed; but she raved, sighed, groaned, started, and was in a state of shame and despair, the most deplorable.

Juliet heard this narration with equal pity and terrour; but no sooner understood that Mrs. Maple had entreated

Mr. Harleigh to remain at Brighthelmstone, for a day or two, than she determined to quit the place herself; persuaded that these bloody enterprizes were always reserved for their joint presence.

The nearly exhausted Elinor passed the rest of the day without effort, without speech, and almost without sign of life. But, early on the following morning, Juliet received from her a hasty summons.

Juliet essayed, by every means that she could devise, to avoid obeying it; but every effort of resistance was ineffectual. By compulsion, therefore, and slowly, she mounted the stairs; secretly determining that, should Harleigh also be called upon, she would seize the first instant in which she could elude observation, to escape, not alone from the room, nor from the house, but from Brighthelmstone; whence she would set off, by the quickest conveyance that she could find, for London and Gabriella.

Elinor, muffled up, and looking pale, haggard, and altered, was reclining upon a sofa; not in compliance with the request of her friends, but from an indispensable necessity of repose, after the violent exertions which had recently shaken her already weakened frame. At the entrance of Juliet she lifted up her head, with an air of eager satisfaction, and exclaimed, "You are really, then, here? And you come, at length, to my call? Harleigh is less courteous! Triumphant Harleigh! he leaves me, he says, to take some rest:—rest?—"

She paused, and her under lip shewed her contempt of the idea; and presently, with a sarcastic smile, she added, "Yes, yes, I shall certainly take rest! I mean no less. He, too, will take some rest! There, at least, ultimately, our destinies will approximate. And you, even you, victorious Ellis! will sink to vapid rest, like those who have never known happiness!"

With a laugh, then, but expressive of

scorn, not gaiety, she exclaimed, "Am I, too, preaching? Can we never be tired, and good for nothing, but we must take to moralizing? Summon him, however, Ellis, yourself. Tell him to come without delay. I am sick;—and he is sick; and you are sick;—we are all round sick of this loathsome procrastination."

Alert to sieze any pretence to be gone, Juliet was already at the door; when Elinor, suddenly seeming to penetrate into her intentions, called her back; and demanded a solemn promise that she would not fail to return with Harleigh.

To the quick perceptions of Elinor, hesitation was alarm; she no sooner, therefore, observed it, than she peremptorily ordered Selina and Mrs. Golding out of the room, and then, yet more positively, commanded Juliet to approach the sofa.

"I see," she cried, "your collusion! You imagine, by coming to me alternately, that you shall keep me in order?

You conclude that I only present myself a bowl and a dagger, like a Tragedy Queen, to have them dashed from my hands, that I may be ready for a similar exhibition another day? — And can Harleigh, the noble Harleigh! judge me thus pitifully? No! no! Full of great and expansive ideas himself, he can better comprehend the exaltation of which a high, uncurbed, independent spirit is capable. But little minds deem all that is not common, all that has not been practised from father to son, and from generation to generation, to be trick, or to be impossible. You, Ellis, and such as you, who act always by rule, who never utter a word of which you have not weighed the consequence; never indulge a wish of which you have not canvassed the effects: who listen to no generous feeling; who shrink from every liberal impulse; who know nothing of nature, and care for nothing but opinion: —you, and such as you, tame animals of custom, wearied and wearying plodders

on of beaten tracks, may conclude me a mere vapouring impostor, and believe it as safe to brave as to despise me! You, Ellis — But no! —"

She stopt, and her look and manner suddenly lost their fierceness, as she added: "Oh no! — You! You are not of that cast! Harleigh can only admire what alone is admirable. He would soon see through littleness or hypocrisy; you must be good and great at once — eminently good, unaffectedly great! — or how could Harleigh, the punctilious, discriminating Harleigh, adore you? Oh! I have known, and secretly appreciated you long; though I have been too little myself to acknowledge it! I have not been calm enough — perhaps not blind enough for justice! for if I saw your beauty less clearly — O happy Ellis! how do I admire, envy, revere, — and hate you!"

Shocked, yet filled with pity, Juliet would have sought to deprecate her enmity, and soften her feelings; but her

fiery eye shewed that any attempt at offering her consolation would be regarded as insult. "I disdain," she cried, "all expedient, all pretence. However the abortion of my purpose may have made me appear a mere female mountebank, I have meant all that I have seemed to mean: though, by waiting for the moment of most *eclat*, opportunity has been past by, and action has been frustrated. But I can die only once. That over,—all is ended. 'Tis therefore I have studied how to finish my career with most effect. Let Harleigh, however, beware how he doubt my sincerity! doubt from him would drive me mad indeed! To the torpid formalities of every-day customs; the drowsy thoughts of every-day thinkers; he may believe me insensible, and I shall thank him; but, indifferent to my own principles of honour!—lost to my own definitions of pride, of shame, of heroism!—Oh! if he touch me there!—if he can judge of me so degradingly . . . . . my senses will still go before my life!"

She held her forehead, with a look of fearful pain; but, soon recovering, laughed, and said, "There are fools, I know, in the world, who suppose me mad already! only because I go my own way; while they, poor cowards, yoked one to another, always follow the path of their forefathers; without even venturing to mend the road, however it may have been broken up by time, accident, or mischief. I have full as much contempt of their imbecility, as they can have of my insanity. But hear me, Ellis! approach and mark me. I must have a conference with Harleigh. You must be present. A last conference! Whatever be its event, I have bound myself to Elinor Joddrel never to demand another! But do not therefore imagine my life or death to be in your power. No! My resolution is taken. Take yours. Let the interview which I demand pass quietly in this room; or be responsible for the consequences of the public desperation to which I may be urged!"

Gloomily, she then added, "Harleigh

has refused to come; I will send him word that you are here; will he still refuse?"

Juliet blushed; but could not answer. Elinor paused a moment, and then said, "If he knows that he can see you elsewhere, he will be firm; if not .... he will return with my messenger! By that I can judge the present state of your connexion."

She rang the bell, and told Mrs. Golding to go instantly to Mr. Harleigh, and acquaint him that Elinor Joddrel and Miss Ellis desired to speak with him immediately.

Vainly Juliet remonstrated against the strange appearance of such a message, not only to himself, but to the family and the world: "Appearance?" she cried; "after what I have done, what I have dared,—have I any terms to keep with the world? with appearances? Miserable, contemptible, servile appearances, to which sense, happiness, and feeling are for ever to be sacrificed!

And what will the world do in return? How recompense the victims to its arbitrary prejudices? By letting them quietly sink into nothing; by suffering them to die with as little notice and distinction as they have lived; and with as little choice."

Mrs. Golding returned, bringing the respects of Mr. Harleigh, but saying that he was forced, by an indispensable engagement, to refuse himself the honour of waiting upon Miss Joddrel.

"Run to him again!—" cried Elinor, with vehemence; "run, or he will be gone! Make him enter the first empty room, and tell him 'tis Miss Ellis alone who desires to speak with him. Fly!"

Yet more earnestly, now, Juliet would have interfered; but the peremptory Elinor insisted upon immediate obedience. "If still," she cried "he come not . . . . I shall conclude you to be already married!"

She laughed, yet wore a face of horrour at this idea; and spoke no more

till Mrs. Golding returned, with intelligence that Mr. Harleigh was waiting in the parlour.

The bosom of Juliet now swelled and heaved high, with tumultuous distress and alarm, and her cheeks were dyed with the crimson tint of conscious shame; while Elinor, turning pale, dropt her head upon the pillow of the sofa, and sighed deeply for a moment in silence. Recovering then, "This, at least," she said, "is explicit; let it be final! Your influence is not disguised; use it, Ellis, to snatch me from the deplorable buffoonery of running about the world—not like death after the lady, but the lady after death! Assure yourselves that you will never devise any stratagem that will turn me from my purpose; though you may render ridiculous in its execution, what in its conception was sublime. Happiness such as yours, Ellis, ought to be above all narrow malignity. You ought to be proud, Ellis, voluntarily to serve her whom involuntarily you have ruined!"

Juliet was beginning some protestations of kindness; but Elinor, interrupting her, said, " I can give credit only to action. I must have a conference; but it is not to talk of myself; — nor of you; nor even of Harleigh. No! the soft moment of indulgence to my feelings is at an end! When I allowed my heart that delicious expansion; when I abandoned it to nature, and permitted it those open effusions of tenderness, I thought my dissolution at hand, and meant but to snatch a few last precious minutes of extacy from everlasting annihilation! but these endless delays, these eternal procrastinations, make me appear so unmeaning an idiot, even to myself, that, for the remnant of my doleful ditty, I must resist every natural wish; and plod on, till I plod off, with the stiff and stupid decorum of a starched old maid of half a century. Procure me, however, this definitive conference. It is upon no point of the old story, I promise you. You cannot

be more tired of that than I am ashamed. 'Tis simply an earnest curiosity to know the pure, unadulterate thoughts of Harleigh upon death and immortality. I have applied to him, fruitlessly, myself; he inexorably refers me to some old canonicals; without considering that it is vain to ask for guides to shew us a road, before we are convinced, or at least persuaded, that it will lead us to some given spot. Let him but make clear, that 'tis his own opinion that death does not sink us to nothing; let him but satisfy me, that he does not turn me over to others, only because he thinks as I think himself, and has not the courage to avow it;—and then, in return, I may suffer him to send to me some one of his black robed tribe, to harangue me about here and hereafter."

All contestation on the part of Juliet, was but irritating; she was forced upon her commission, and compelled solemnly to promise, that she would return with Harleigh, and be present at the conference.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

WITH unsteady footsteps, and covered with blushes, Juliet repaired to the parlour, where Harleigh, with dedelighted, yet trembling impatience, was awaiting her arrival.

The door was half open, and he had placed himself at a distant window, to force her entire entrance into the room, before she could see him, or speak; but, that point gained, he hastened to shut it, exclaiming, " How happy for me is this incident, whatever may have been its origin! Let me instantly avail myself of it, to entreat — "

" Give me leave," interrupted Juliet, looking every way to avoid his eyes; " to deliver my message. Miss Joddrel—"

" When we begin," cried Harleigh, eagerly, " upon the unhappy Elinor,

she must absorb us; let me, then, first —"

"I must be heard, Sir," said Juliet, with more firmness, "or I must be gone! —"

"You must be heard, then, undoubtedly!" he cried, with a smile, and offering her a chair, "for you must not be gone!"

Juliet declined being seated, but delivered, nearly in the words that she had received it, her message.

Harleigh looked pained and distressed, yet impatient, as he listened. "How," he cried, "can I argue with her? The false exaltation of her ideas, the effervescence of her restless imagination, place her above, or below, whatever argument, or reason can offer to her consideration. Her own creed is settled — not by investigation into its merits, not by reflection upon its justice, but by an impulsive preference, in the persuasion that such a creed leaves her mistress of her destiny."

"Ah, do not resist her!" cried Ju-

liet. "If there is any good to be done —do it! and without delay!"

"It is not you I can resist!" he tenderly answered, "if deliberately it is your opinion I should comply. But her peculiar character, her extraordinary principles, and the strange situation into which she has cast herself, give her, for the moment, advantages difficult, nay dangerous to combat. Unawed by religion, of which she is ignorant; unmoved by appearances, to which she is indifferent; she utters all that occurs to an imagination inflamed by passion, disordered by disappointment, and fearless because hopeless, with a courage from which she has banished every species of restraint: and with a spirit of ridicule, that so largely pervades her whole character, as to burst forth through all her sufferings, to mix derision with all her sorrows, and to preponderate even over her passions! Reason and argument appear to her but as marks for dashing eloquence or sportive mockery. Never-

theless, if, by striking at every thing, daringly, impetuously, unthinkingly, she start some sudden doubt; demand some impossible explanation; or ask some humanly unanswerable question; she will conclude herself victorious; and be more lost than ever to all that is right, from added false confidence in all that is wrong."

"If so, the conference were, indeed, better avoided," said Juliet with sadness; "yet—as it is not the sacred truth of revealed religion that she means to canvass; as it is merely the previous question, of the possibility, or impossibility, according to her notions, of a future state for mankind, which she desires to discuss; I do not quite see the danger of answering the doubts, or refuting the assertions, that may lead her afterwards, to an investigation so important to her future welfare. If she would consult with a clergyman, it were certainly preferable; but that will be a point no longer difficult to gain, when once you

have convinced her, upon her own terms of controversy, that you yourself have a firm belief in immortality."

"The attempt shall surely be made," said Harleigh, "if you think such a result, as casting her into more reverend hands, may ensue. If I have fled all controversy with her, from the time that she has publicly proclaimed her religious infidelity, it has by no means been from disgust; an unbeliever is simply an object of pity; for who is so deplorably without resource in sickness or calamity? —those two common occupiers of half our existence! No; if I have fled all voluntary intercourse with her, it has only been that her total contempt of the world, has forced me to take upon myself the charge of public opinion for us both. While I considered her as the future wife of my brother, I frankly contested whatever I thought wrong in her notions. The wildness of her character, the eccentricity of her ideas, and the violence of all her feelings; with her

extraordinary understanding — parts, I ought to say; for understanding implies rather what is solid than brilliant; — joined to the goodness of her heart, and the generosity, frankness, and openness of her nature, excited at once an anxiety for my brother, and an interest for herself, that gave occasion to the most affectionate animadversion on my part, and produced alternate defence or concession on hers. But her disdain of flattery, or even of civil acquiescence, made my freedom, opposed to the courteous complaisance which my brother deemed due to his situation of her humble servant, strike her in a point of view . . . that has been unhappy for us all three! Yet this was a circumstance which I had never suspected, — for, where no wish is met, remark often sleeps; — and I had been wholly unobservant, till you—"

Called from the deep interest with which she had involuntarily listened to the relation of his connection with Elinor, by this sudden transition to herself, Juliet started; but he went on.

" Till you were an inmate of the same house! till I saw her strange consternation, when she found me conversing with you; her rising injustice when, with the respect and admiration which you inspired, I mentioned you; her restless vigilance to interrupt whatever communication I attempted to have with you; her sudden fits of profound, yet watchful taciturnity, when I saw you in her presence;—"

" I may tell her," interrupted Juliet, disturbed, " that you will wait upon her according to her request?"

" When you," cried he, smiling, " are her messenger, she must not expect quite so quick, quite so categorical an answer! I must first—"

" On the contrary, her impatience will be insupportable if I do not relieve it immediately."

She would have opened the door, but, preventing her, " Can you indeed believe," he cried, with vivacity; " is it possible you can believe, that, having

once caught a ray of light, to illumine and cheer the dread and nearly impervious darkness, that so long and so blackly over-clouded all my prospects, I can consent, can endure to be cast again into desolate obscurity?"

Juliet, blushing, and conscious of his allusion to her reception of him in the church yard, for which, without naming Sir Lyell Sycamore, she knew not how to account, again protested that she must not be detained.

Still, however, half reproachfully, half laughingly, stopping her, "And is it thus," he cried, "that you summon me to Brighthelmstone, — only to mock my obedience, and disdain to hear me?"

"I, Sir? — I, summon you?"

"Nay, see my credentials!"

He presented to her the following note, written in an evidently feigned hand:

"If Mr. Harleigh will take a ramble "to the church-yard upon the Hill,

"at Brighthelmstone, next Thursday "morning, at five o'clock, he will there "meet a female fellow-traveller, now "in the greatest distress, who solicits "his advice and assistance, to extricate "her from her present intolerable "abode."

Deeply colouring, "And could Mr. Harleigh," she cried, "even for a moment believe, — suppose, —"

He interrupted her, with an air of tender respect. "No; I did not, indeed, dare believe, dare suppose that an honour, a trust such as might be implied by an appeal like this, came from you! Yet for you I was sure it was meant to pass; and to discover by whom it was devised, and for what purpose, irresistibly drew me hither, though with full conviction of imposition. I came, however, pre-determined to watch around your dwelling, at the appointed hour, ere I repaired to the bidden place. But what was my agitation when I thought I

saw you! I doubted my senses. I retreated; I hung back; your face was shaded by your head-dress; — yet your air, — your walk, — was it possible I could be deceived? Nevertheless, I resolved not to speak, nor to approach you, till I saw whether you proceeded to the church-yard. I was by no means free from suspicion of some new stratagem of Elinor; for, fatigued with concealment, I was then publicly at my house upon Bagshot-Heath, where the note had reached me. Yet her distance from Brighthelmstone for so early an hour, joined to intelligence which I had received some time ago, — for you will not imagine that the period which I spend without seeing, I spend also without hearing of you? — that you had been observed, — and more than once, — at that early hour, in the church-yard—"

"True!" cried Juliet, eagerly, "at that hour I have frequently met, or accompanied, a friend, a beloved friend! thither; and, in her name, I had even

then, when I saw you, been deluded: not for a walk; a ramble; not upon any party of pleasure; but to visit a little tomb, which holds the regretted remains of the darling and only child of that dear, unhappy friend!"

She wept. Harleigh, extremely touched, said, "You have, then, a friend here?" — Is it, — may I ask? — is it the person you so earnestly sought upon your arrival? — Is your anxiety relieved? — your embarrassment? — your suspence? — your cruel distress? — Will you not give me, at length, some little satisfaction? Can you wonder that my forbearance is worn out? — Can my impatience offend you?—If I press to know your situation, it is but with the desire to partake it! — If I solicit to hear your name — it is but with the hope ... that you will suffer me to change it!"

He would have taken her hand, but, drawing back, and wiping her eyes, though irresistibly touched, "Offend?" she repeated; "Oh far,—far!...

but why will you recur to a subject that ought so long since to have been exploded? — while another, — an essential one, calls for all my attention? — The last packet which you left with me, you must suffer me instantly to return; the first, — the first —" She stammered, coloured, and then added, " The first, — I am shocked to own, — I must defer returning yet a little longer!"

" Defer?" ardently repeated Harleigh. " Ah! why not condescend to think, at least, another language, if not to speak it? Why not anticipate, in kind idea, at least, the happy period,—for me! when I may be permitted to consider as included, and mutual in our destinies, whatever hitherto ——"

" Oh hold! — Oh Mr. Harleigh!" interrupted Juliet, in a voice of anguish. " Let no errour, no misconstruction, of this terrible sort, — no inference, no expectation, thus wide from all possible reality, add to my various misfortunes the misery of remorse!"

"Remorse?—Gracious powers! What can you mean?"

"That I have committed the most dreadful of mistakes,—a mistake that I ought never to forgive myself, if, in the relief from immediate perplexity, which I ventured to owe to a momentary, and, I own, an intentionally unacknowledged, usage of some of the notes which you forced into my possession, I have given rise to a belief,—to an idea,—to—"

She hesitated, and blushed so violently, that she could not finish her phrase; but Harleigh appeared thunder-struck, and was wholly silent. She looked down, abashed, and added, "The instant, by any possible means,—by work, by toil, by labour,—nothing will be too severe,—all will be light and easy,—that can rectify,—that—"

She could not proceed; and Harleigh, somewhat recovered by the view of her confusion, gently, though reproachfully, said, "All, then, will be preferable to the slightest, smallest trust in me?—

And is this from abhorrence?—or do you deem me so ungenerous as to believe that I should take unworthy advantage of being permitted to offer you even the most trivial service?"

"No, no, oh, no!" with quickness cried Juliet; "but the more generous you may be, the more readily you may imagine ——"

She stopt, at a loss how to finish.

"That you would be generous, too?" cried Harleigh, revived and smiling.

She could not refrain from a smile herself, but hastily added, "My conduct must be liable to no inference of any sort. Adieu, Sir. I will deliver you the packet in Miss Joddrel's room."

Her hand was upon the lock, but his foot, fixed firmly against the door, impeded its being opened, while he exclaimed, "I cannot part with you thus! You must clear this terrific obscurity, that threatens to involve me, once more, in the horrours of excruciating suspense! —Why that cruel expression of dis-

pleasure? Can you think that the moment of hope,—however brief, however unintentional, however accidental,—can ever be obliterated from my thoughts? that my existence, to whatever term it may be lengthened, will ever out-live the precious remembrance that you have called me your destined protector?—your guardian angel?"

He could add no more; a mortal paleness overspread the face of Juliet, who, letting go the lock of the door, sunk upon a chair, faintly ejaculating, "Was I not yet sufficiently miserable?"

Penetrated with sorrow, and struck with alarm, Harleigh looked at her in silence; but when again he sought to take her hand, shrinking from his touch, though regarding him with an expression that supplicated rather than commanded forbearance; "If you would not kill me, Mr. Harleigh," she cried, "you will relinquish this terrible perseverance!"

"Relinquish?" he repeated, "What now? Now, that all delicacy for this

wild, eccentric, though so generous Elinor is at an end? that she has, herself, annulled your engagement? Relinquish, now, the hopes so long pursued,—so difficultly caught? No, I swear to you—"

Juliet arose. "Oh hold, Mr. Harleigh!" she cried; "recollect yourself a moment! I lament if I have, involuntarily, caused you any transient mistake; yet, do me the justice to reflect, that I have never cast my destiny upon that of Miss Joddrel. No decision, therefore, of her's can make any change in mine."

She again put her hand upon the lock of the door.

Harleigh fixt upon her his eyes, which spoke the severest disturbance, while, in tremulous accents, he uttered, "And can you leave me thus, to wasting despondence?—and with this cold, chilling, blighting composure?—Is it from pitiless apathy, which incapacitates for judging of torments which it does not

experience?—O no! Those eyes that so often glisten with the most touching sensibility,—those cheeks that so beautifully mantle with the varying dies of quick transition of sentiment,—that mouth, which so expressively plays in harmony with every word,—nay, every thought,—all, all announce a heart where every virtue is seconded and softened by every feeling!—a mind alive to the quickest sensations, yet invigorated with the ablest understanding! a soul of angelic purity!—"

Some sound from the passage made him suddenly stop, and remove his foot; while the hand of Juliet dropt from the lock. They were both silent, and both, affrighted, stood suspended; till Juliet, shocked at the impropriety of such a situation, forced herself to open the door,—at the other side of which, looking more dead than alive, stood Elinor, leaning upon her sister.

"I began to think," she cried, in a hollow tone, "that you were eloped!—

and determining to trust to no messenger, I came myself." She then endeavoured to call forth a smile; but it visited so unwillingly features nearly distorted by internal agony, that it gave a cast almost ghastly to her countenance.

"Why, Harleigh," she cried, "should you thus shun me? Have I not given back her plighted faith to Ellis? Yet I am not ignorant how tired you must be of those old thread-bare topics, bowls, daggers, poignards, and bodkins: but they have had their reign, and are now dethroned. What remains is plain, common, stupid rationality. I wish to converse with you, Albert, only as a casuist; and upon a point of conscience which you alone can settle. For this world, and for all that belongs to it, all, with me, is utterly over! I have neither care nor interest left in it; and I have no belief that there is any other. I am very composedly ready, therefore, to take my last nap. I merely wish to learn, before I return to my torpid

ignorance, whether it can be a fact, that you, Harleigh, you! believe in a future state for mortal man? And I engage you by your friendship,—which I still prize above all things! and by your honour, which you, I know, prize in the same manner, to answer me this question, instantly and categorically."

"Most faithfully, then, Elinor, yes! All the happiness of my present life is founded upon my belief of a life to come!"

Elinor held up her hands. "Astonishing!" she cried. "Can judgment and credulity, wisdom and superstition, thus jumble themselves together! And in a head so clear, so even oracular! Give me, at least, your reasons; and see that they are your own!"

Harleigh looked disturbed, but made not any answer.

The wan face of Elinor was now lighted up with hues of scarlet. "I feel," she cried, "the impropriety of this intrusion;—for who, if not I,—

since we all prize most what we know least,—should respect happiness? When you have finished, however, your present conference, honour me, both of you, if you please,—that the period so employed may be less wearisome to either,—with a final one up stairs. Harleigh! A final one!"

Harleigh was still silent.

A yet deeper red now dyed the whole complexion of Elinor, and she added, "If, to-day, you are too much engaged,—to-morrow will suffice. To-day, indeed, your solemn protestation of belief, upon a subject which to me, is a chaos,—dark,—impervious, impenetrable! has given ample employment to my ideas."

Repulsing, then, his silently offered arm, she returned, with Selina, to the chamber consigned to her by Mrs. Ireton.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

HARLEIGH, confused, disconcerted, remained motionless; but when the conscious Juliet would have glided silently past him, he entreated for a moment's audience.

"Oh no, Mr. Harleigh, no!" she cried: "these are scenes and alarms, that must be risked no more!—"

She was hurrying away; but, upon his saying, "Hear me, at least, for Elinor!" she turned back.

His eye, now reproached even her compliance; but he rapidly communicated his opinion, that the conference demanded by Elinor ought, in prudence, for the present, to be avoided; since, while she had still some favourite object in view, life, would, unconsciously, be still supported. Time, thus, might insensibly be gained, not only for eluding

her fatal project, but happily, perhaps, for taming the dauntless wildness that made her, now, seem to stand scoffingly at bay, between life and death.

Juliet saw nothing to oppose to this statement, and thanking him that, at least, it liberated her, was again hastening away.

"Hold, hold!" cried he, stopping her: "it is not from me that it must liberate you! Elinor has ratified the restoration of your word—"

"Oh, were that all!—" she cried, hastily; but, stopping short, deeply blushing, "Mr. Harleigh," she added, "compel me not to repeat declarations that cannot vary!—Aid me rather, generously,—kindly, shall I say?—aid me,—to fly, to avoid you,—lest you become yourself..." her voice faltered as she pronounced, "the most fatal of my enemies!"

The penetrated Harleigh, charmed, though tortured, saw her eyes glittering with tears; but she forced her way past him, and took refuge in her chamber.

There, in deep anguish, she was sinking upon a chair, when she received the gentle balm of a letter from Gabriella, written with extatic joy at the prospect of their re-union.

This decided her plan of immediate escape to London, under a full conviction that Harleigh, to obviate any calumnious surmizes from her disappearance, would studiously shew himself in the world; however cautiously he might avoid any interview with Elinor.

The shock of Juliet, at this unfortunate intrusion, somewhat abated, when she reflected that confirmed hopelessness might, perchance, lead Elinor to acquiescence in disappointment; for hopelessness, equally with resignation,—though not so respectably,—terminates all struggles against misfortune.

She now, therefore, seized an opportunity, when she knew Mrs. Ireton to be engaged with Mrs. Maple, for going forth to secure a place in some machine, for a journey to London on the following morning.

This office performed, she thought, while returning home, that she perceived, though at a considerable distance, Harleigh.

In the dread of some new conflict, she was planning to seek another way back, when recollecting that she had his bank-notes in her work-bag, she judged that she might more promptly return them at this accidental meeting, than in the house of Mrs. Ireton.

She slackened, therefore, her pace, and, taking out her ever ready packet, turned round, as the footstep approached, gravely and calmly to deliver it; when, to her utter surprize, she faced Lord Melbury.

Pleasure emitted its brightest hues in the tints of her cheeks, at sight of the marked respect that chastened the visible delight with which she was looked at and accosted by the young peer. "How fortunate," he cried, "am I to meet with you thus directly! This moment only I dismount from my horse. I have a million of things to say to you from

Aurora, if you will have the goodness to hear them; and I have more at heart still my own claim upon your patience. When may I see you for a little conversation?"

The pleasure of Juliet was now severely checked by perplexity, how either to fulfil or to break her engagement. Observing the change in her countenance, and her hesitation and difficulty to answer, Lord Melbury, whose look and air changed also, said, in a tone of concern, "Miss Ellis has not forgotten her kind promise?"

"Your lordship is extremely good, to remember either that or me; yet I hope ——"

"What does Miss Ellis hope? I would not counteract her hopes for the world; but surely she cannot be so cruel as to disappoint mine? to make me fear that she has changed her opinion? to withdraw her amiable trust?"

"No, my lord, no! not a moment could I hesitate were trust alone in

question! but the hurry of this instant, —the impossibility of detailing so briefly, and by an imperfect account—"

"And why an imperfect account? Why, dear Miss Ellis, since you have the kindness to believe I may be trusted, not confide to me the whole truth?"

"Alas, my lord! how?—where?"

"In some parlour,—in the garden,—any where.—"

"Ah, my lord, what I have to say must be uninterrupted; unheard but by yourself; and—I can command neither a place nor a moment free from intrusion!"—

"Sweet Miss Ellis!—sweet injured Miss Ellis! I know, I have witnessed the unworthiness of your treatment. Even Aurora, with all her gentleness, has been as indignant at it, nearly, as myself. All our wonder is how you bear it!—We burn, we expire to learn what can urge so undue a subjection. But I have not obtruded myself upon you only for myself; I have galloped hither to pre-

pare you, — and to entreat you not to be uneasy, — and to save you from any surprize, by acquainting you that my uncle Denmeath —"

He stopt short, as if thunderstruck. Juliet, alarmed, looked at him, and saw that, in bending over her, to name, in a lower voice, his uncle, his eyes had caught the direction of her packet, 'For Albert Harleigh, Esq.'

Shocked at the evidently unpleasant effect which this sight produced, and covered with blushes at the suspicions to which it might give rise, Juliet hastily exclaimed, "Oh my lord! I must no longer defer my explanation! any, every risk will be preferable to the loss of your esteem!"

Delight, enchantment again were depicted on the countenance, as they seized the faculties of the young peer; and, involuntarily, his eager hands were stretching forwards to seize hers, when he perceived, just approached to them, pale, agitated, and with the look of

some one taken suddenly ill, Harleigh.

The colour of Juliet now rose and died away alternately, from varying sensations of shame and apprehension; to which the deepest confusion soon succeeded, as she discerned the contrast of the cheeks, whitened by pale jealousy, of Harleigh; with those of Lord Melbury, which were crimsoned with the reddest hues of sudden suspicion, and painful mistrust.

Harleigh, with a faint and forced smile, bowed, but stood aloof: Lord Melbury seemed to have not alone his sentiments, but his faculties held in suspension.

Juliet, with cruel consciousness, perceived that each surmized something clandestine of the other; and the immense importance which she annexed to their joint good opinion; and the imminent danger which she saw of the double forfeiture, soon re-invigorated her powers, and, addressing herself with

dignity, though in a tone of softness, to Lord Melbury, " If you judge me, my lord, from partial circumstances," she cried, " I have every thing to apprehend for what I value more than words can express, your lordship's approbation of the favour with which I am honoured by Lady Aurora Granville; but let me rather hope,—suffer me, my lord, to hope, that by the opinion I have formed of the honour of your own character, you will judge,—though at present in the dark,—of the integrity of mine!"

Turning then from him, as, touched, electrified, he was beginning, " I have always judged you to be an angel!"— she would have presented her packet to Harleigh; though without raising her eyes, saying, " Mr. Harleigh has so long,—and upon so many occasions, honoured me with marks of his esteem, —and benevolence,—that I flatter myself,—I think,—I trust—"

She stammered, confused; and Har-

leigh, who, from the moment that Lady Aurora had been mentioned, had recovered his complexion, his respiration, and his strength; recovered, also, his hopes and his energy, at sight of the embarrassment of Juliet. Not doubting, however, what were the contents of the packet, he held back from receiving it; though with a smile that conveyed the most lively expression of grateful delight, at her palpable anxiety to preserve his esteem.

"Nay, you must take your property!" she resumed, with attempted cheerfulness; yet blushing more deeply every moment, at thus betraying to Lord Melbury that she had any property of Mr. Harleigh's to return.

"I will take your commands in every shape in which they can be framed," cried Harleigh, gaily; "but you must not refuse to grant me, at the same time, directions for their execution."

The interest with which Lord Melbury listened to what passed, was now

mingled with undisguised impatience: but Juliet could not endure to satisfy him; could not support letting him know, that she retained money of Harleigh's in her hands; nor yet bear to suffer Harleigh, now the address had been seen, to leave it still in her possession: hesitating, abashed, she turned from one to the other, with looks at Lord Melbury that seemed appealing for forbearance; and to Harleigh with downcast eyes, that had not force to encounter his, but that were expressive of distress, timidity, and fear of misconstruction.

This pause, while it astonished and perplexed Lord Melbury, gave rise, in Harleigh, to the most flattering emotions. Her disturbance was, indeed, visible, and cruelly painful to him; but, since their meeting in the church-yard, the severity of her reserve had seemed shaken, beyond her power, evident as were her struggles, to call back its original firmness. The more exquisitely

he felt himself bewitched by this observation, the more fondly he desired to spare her delicacy, by concealing, though not repressing his hopes ; but his eyes, less under his controul than his words, air, or address, spoke a language not to be doubted of tenderness, and sparkled with lustrous happiness. Juliet felt their beams too powerfully to mistake, or even to sustain them. Her head dropt, her eyelids nearly closed ; blushing shame tingled in her cheeks, and apprehension and perturbation trembled in every limb.

Perceiving, and adoring, her inability to find utterance, Harleigh, with subdued rapture, yet in a tone that spoke all his feelings to be, at length, in harmony with all his wishes, was gently beginning an entreaty that she would adjourn this little dispute to another day, when the words, " Well ! if here i'n't the very person we were talking off !" striking his ears, he looked round, and saw Miss Bydel, accompanied by Mr. Giles Arbe ; whose

approach had been unheeded by them all, from the deep interest which had concentrated their attention to themselves.

"Why, Mrs. Ellis," she continued, "why what are you doing here? I should like to know that. I've just had a smart battle about you with my good friend, Mr. Giles. He will needs have it, that you paid all your debts from a hoard that you had by you, of your own; though I have told him I dare say an hundred times, at the least, I must needs be a better judge, having been paid myself, for my own share, by that cross-grained Baronet, who's been such a good friend to you."

The sensations of Juliet underwent now another change, though shame was still predominant; her fears of exciting the expectations she sought to annul in Harleigh, were superseded by a terrour yet more momentous, of giving ground for suspicion, not alone to himself, but to Lord Melbury, that, while fashioning a thousand difficulties, to accepting the assistance that was generously and deli-

cately offered by themselves, she had suffered a third person, that person, also, a gentleman, to supply her pecuniary necessities. She breathed hard, and looked disordered, but could suggest nothing to say; while Harleigh and Lord Melbury stood as if transfixed by disturbed astonishment.

"Well! I protest," resumed Miss Bydel, "if here i'n't another of the people that we were talking of, Mr. Giles! for I declare it's Mr. Harleigh, that I was telling you, you know, my good friend, was the person that made poor Miss Joddrel make away with her herself, because of his skimper-scampering after Mrs. Ellis, when she had that swoon! which, to be sure, had but an out of the way look; for the music would have taken care of her. Don't you think so yourself, my dear?"

The most painful confusion again took possession of Juliet; who would silently have walked away, had not Miss Bydel caught hold of her arm, saying, "Don't

be in a hurry, my dear, for you shan't be chid; for I'll speak for you myself to Mrs. Ireton."

"I am mighty glad to hear that Sir Jaspar is your friend, my pretty lady," said the smiling Mr. Giles; "and I am mighty glad, too, that you have persuaded him to help to pay your debts. He's a very good sort of man, where he takes; and very witty and clever. Though he is crabbed, too; rather crabbed and waspish, when he i'n't pleased. He always scolds all the men: and, indeed, the maids, too, when they a'n't pretty, poor things! And they can't help that: else, I dare say, they would. Yet, I am afraid, I don't like them quite so well myself, neither, in my heart, when they are ugly; which is but hard upon them; so I always do them double the good, to punish myself. But I'm prodigiously sorry you should have taken to that turn of running in debt, my dear, for it's the only thing I know to your disadvantage; for which reason I have never named it

to a single soul; only it just dropt out, before I was aware, to Miss Bydel; which I am sorry enough for; for I am afraid it will be but hard to her, poor lady, to keep it to herself."

"What do you mean by that Mr. Giles?" cried Miss Bydel, angrily. "Do you want to insinuate that I don't know how to keep a secret? I should be glad to know what right you have to fleer at a person about that, when you blab out every thing in such a manner yourself! and before these two gentlemen, too; who don't lose a word of what passes, I can tell you!"

"True! Good! You are right there, Mrs. Bydel! I did not think of that, I protest. However, these two gentlemen have too much kindness about them, to repeat a thing that may hurt a young person just coming, as one may say, into the world; for she is but a chicken; and my lord, here, who looks younger still, is scarcely more than an egg. So you may be sure he has no guile in

him, for he seems almost as innocent as herself. However, my pretty lady, if you have still any more debts, new or old, only tell me who you owe them to, and I'll run and fetch all the people here; and we'll join together to discharge them at once; for Mr. Harleigh is always at home when he is doing good; and this young nobleman can't begin too soon to learn what he is rich for: so you can never be in better hands for taking up a little money. When we settled the last batch, you had no debt left but to Mrs. Bydel; and, as the Baronet has paid her, she's off our hands. So tell me whether there is any new one that you have been running up since?"

Wounded, and nearly indignant at this demand, "None!" Juliet spontaneously answered; when catching a glance at Lord Melbury, who involuntarily looked down, his purse and the fifteen guineas of Lady Aurora, rushed upon her memory, and filled her again with visible embarrassment.

"Good! good!" cried the pleased Mr. Giles: "you could not tell me better news. But are there any poor souls, then, that you forgot to mention in our last reckoning? Are there any old debts that you did not count?"

Inexpressibly hurt at a supposition so offensive to her sense of probity, Juliet hastily repeated, "No, Sir, there are none!" but, in raising her head, and encountering the penetrating eyes of Harleigh, the terrible recollection of the capital into which she had broken, and of the large sum so long his due, struck cold to her heart; though it burnt her cheeks with a dye of crimson.

Yet were these sensations nearly nugatory, compared with those which she suffered the next instant, when Miss Bydel, suddenly perceiving the direction upon the packet, read aloud 'For Albert Harleigh, Esq.'

Her exclamations, her blunt, unqualified interrogatories, and the wonder, and simple ejaculations of Mr. Giles

Arbe, filled Juliet with a confusion so intolerable, that she forced her arm from Miss Bydel, with intention to insist upon publicly restoring the packet to Harleigh; but Harleigh, confounded himself, had advanced towards the house, which, frequently as they had stopt, they now insensibly reached; but from which he would most willingly have retrograded, upon seeing Ireton issue, laughing, into the portico.

The laugh of Ireton, whose gaiety was always derision, and whose derision was always scandal, though it was innocently echoed by the unsuspicious Mr. Giles, was as alarming to the two gentlemen and to Juliet, as it was offensive to Miss Bydel; who pettishly demanded, "Pray what are you laughing at, Mr. Ireton? I should like to know that. If it is at me, you may as well tell me at once, for I shall be sure to find it out; because I always make a point of doing that."

Ireton, seizing upon Harleigh, ex-

claimed "What, Monsieur le Moniteur! still hankering after our mysterious fair one?" when, perceiving the wishes of Juliet, to pass on, he wantonly filled up the door-way.

Harleigh, who, also, could not but guess them, though he dared not look at her, hoped, by delaying her entrance, to catch a moment's discourse: but the youthful Lord Melbury, deeming all caution to be degrading, that interfered with protection to a lovely female, openly desired that Ireton would stand aside, and let the ladies enter the house.

"Most undoubtedly, my lord!" answered Ireton, making way, with an air of significant acquiescence.

Miss Bydel, with a warm address of thanks to his lordship, whose interference she received as a personal civility, said, "This is like a gentleman, indeed, my lord, and quite fit for a lord to do, to take the part of us poor weak women, against people that keep one standing out in the street, because they

think of nothing but joking;" and then, telling Juliet to follow her, "I can do no less," she added, as she entered the hall, "than be as good as my word to this poor young music-maker, to save her a chiding, poor creature, for staying, dawdling, out so long; when ten to one but poor Mrs. Ireton has wanted her a hundred times, for one odd thing or another. But I shall take all the fault upon myself for the last part of the job, because I can't deny but I held her a minute or two by her arm. But what she was gossipping about before we came up to her, my good friend Mr. Giles and I, is what I don't pretend to say; though I should like to know very well; for it had but an odd appearance, I must own; both you gentlemen having been talked of so much, in the town, about this young person."

The most pointed darts of wit, and even the poisoned shafts of malice, are less disconcerting to delicacy, than the unqualified bluntness of the curious un-

der-bred; for that which cannot be imputed to a spirit of sarcasm, or a desire of shining, passes, to the bye-standers, for unvarnished truth. As such, the intimation of Miss Bydel was palpably received by Ireton, and by Mr. Giles; though with malevolent wilfulness by the one, and, by the other, with the simplest credulity; while Lord Melbury, Harleigh and Juliet, were too much ashamed to look up, and too much confounded to attempt parrying so gross an attack.

Yet both Lord Melbury and Harleigh, urged invincibly by a desire of knowing in what manner Juliet was to be patronized by her loquacious mediatrix, and how they might themselves fare in the account, irresistibly entered the mansion; though marvelling, each, at the curiosity, and blaming the indiscretion of the other.

To avoid the aspersion of making a clandestine retreat, Juliet had decided, however painful to her might be such an

exertion, openly to relinquish her situation with Mrs. Ireton; but she by no means felt equal to risking the irascibility of that lady before so many witnesses. Nevertheless, when she would have glided from the party, Miss Bydel, again seizing her arm, called out, "Come, don't be afraid, Mrs. Ellis: I've promised to take your part, and I am always as good as my word;" and then dragged, rather than drew her into the drawing-room; closely attended by Lord Melbury, Harleigh, Mr. Giles Arbe, and Ireton.

## CHAPTER LXV.

UNWEARIEDLY concerting means of detection relative to the stranger, which no failure of success could discourage, Mrs. Ireton and Mrs. Maple sate whispering upon the same sofa in the drawing-room; while Selina and Miss Arramede were tittering at a window.

"How do you do, ladies?" cried Miss Bydel. "In close chat, I see. However, I don't want to know what it's about. I'm only come to speak a word about this poor thing here, for fear you should think she has been all this time gossipping about her own affairs; which, I assure you, Mrs. Ireton, I can bear witness for her i'n't the case."

The supercilious silence of Mrs. Ireton to this address, would have authorised the immediate retreat of Juliet, but that

Ireton maliciously placed himself against the door, and impeded its being opened; while Lord Melbury and Harleigh were obliged to approach the sofa, to pay their compliments to the lady of the mansion; who, giving them her whole attention, left Miss Bydel to finish her harangue to Mrs. Maple.

"Right! True!" cried Mr. Giles, eager to abet what he thought the good nature of Miss Bydel. "What you say is just and fair, Mrs. Bydel; for this pretty young lady here wanted to go from these two gentlemen the minute we came up to her; only Mrs. Bydel's arm being rather, I conceive, heavy, she could not so soon break away. But I did not catch one of her pretty dimples all the time. So pray, Mrs. Ireton, don't be angry with her; and the less because she's so sweet tempered, that, if you are, she won't complain; for she never did of Mrs. Maple."

"I hope this is curious enough!" cried Mrs. Maple. "A body to come and live

upon me, for months together, upon charity, and then not to complain of me! I think if this is not enough to cure people of charity, I wonder what is! For my part, I am heartily sick of it, for the rest of my life."

Juliet having again, but vainly, tried to pass by Ireton, retired to an unoccupied window. Harleigh, though engaged in discourse with Mrs. Ireton, reddened indignantly; and Lord Melbury nearly mashed the nails of his fingers between his teeth; while Mr. Giles, staring, demanded, "Why what can there be, Ma'am, in charity, to turn you so sick? A poor helpless young creature, like that, can't make you her toad-eater."

Alarmed at an address which she looked upon as a prognostic to an exhortation, of which she dreaded, from experience, the plainness and severity, Mrs. Maple hastily changed her place: while Mrs. Ireton, startled, also, by the word toad-eater, unremittingly continued

speaking to the two gentlemen; whose attention, nevertheless, she could not for a moment engage, though their looks and persons were her prisoners.

"I don't know why you ladies who are so rich and gay," continued Mr. Giles, composedly, and, to the great annoyance of Mrs. Ireton, taking possession of the seat which Mrs. Maple had abdicated; "should not try to make yourselves pleasing to those who are poor and sad. You, that have got every thing you can wish for, should take as much pains not to be distasteful, as a poor young thing like that, who has got nothing but what she works for, should take pains not to be starved."

Mrs. Ireton, extremely incensed, though affecting to be unconcerned, haughtily summoned Ellis.

Ellis, forced to obey, went to the back of the sofa, to avoid standing by the side of the two gentlemen; and determined to make use of this opportunity for announcing her project of retreat.

"Pray, Ma'am," Mrs. Ireton cried, "permit me to enquire—" her eye angrily, yet cautiously, glancing at Mr. Giles, "to what extraordinary circumstance I am indebted, for having the honour of receiving your visitors? Not that I am insensible to such a distinction; you won't imagine me such an Hottentot, I hope, as to be insensible to so honourable a distinction! Nevertheless, you'll pardon me, I trust, if I take the liberty to intimate, that, for the future, when any of your friends are to be indulged in waiting upon you, you will have the goodness to receive them in your own apartments. You'll excuse the hint, I flatter myself!"

"I shall intrude no apologies upon your time, Madam," said Ellis, calmly, "for relinquishing a situation in which I have acquitted myself so little to your satisfaction: to-morrow, therefore—"

Anticipating, and eager to convert a resignation which she regarded as a disgrace, into a dismission which she

considered as a triumph, Mrs. Ireton impatiently interrupted her, crying, "To-morrow? And why are we to wait for to-morrow? What has to-day done? Permit me to ask that. And pray don't take it ill. Pray don't let me offend you: only—what has poor to-day done, that to-morrow must have such a preference?"

Juliet, frightened at the idea of being reduced to pass a night alone at an inn, now hesitated; and Mrs. Ireton, smiling complacently around her, went on.

"Suffer me, I beg, to speak a little word for poor, neglected to-day! Have we not long enough been slaves to to-morrow? Let the pleasures of dear expectation be superseded, this once, for those of actual enjoyment. Not but 'twill be very severe upon me to lose you. I don't dissemble that. So gay a companion! I shall certainly expire an hypochondriac upon first missing your amusing sallies. I can never survive such a deprivation. No! it's all over

with me! You pity me, I am sure, my good friends?"

She now looked around, with an expression of ineffable satisfaction at her own wit: but it met no applause, save in the ever ready giggle of Selina, and the broad admiration of the round-eyed Miss Bydel.

Juliet silently courtsied, with a gravity that implied a leave-taking, and, approaching the door, desired that Ireton would let her pass.

Ireton, laughing, declared that he should not suffer her to decamp, till she gave him a direction where he could find her the next day.

Offended, she returned again to her window.

"O, now, pray, Mrs. Ireton," cried Miss Bydel, "don't turn her away, poor thing! don't turn her away, Ma'am, for such a mere little fault. I dare say she'll do her best to please you, if you'll only try her again. Besides, if she's turned off in this manner, just as young Lord Melbury is here, he may try to

make her his kept mistress again. At least naughty people will say so."

"Who will say so, Ma'am?" cried Lord Melbury, starting up, in a rage to which he was happy to find so laudable a vent: "Who will dare say so? Name me a single human being!"

"Lord, my lord," answered Miss Bydel, a little frightened; "nobody, very likely! only it's best to be upon one's guard against evil speakers; for young lords at your time of life, a'n't apt to be quite so good as they are when they are more stricken in years. That's all I mean, my lord; for I don't mean to affront your lordship, I'm sure."

Mrs. Ireton, again beckoning to Ellis, said, "Pray, Mrs. Thing-a-mi, have you done me so much honour as to make out your bill?" And, ostentatiously, she produced her purse. "What is the amount, Ma'am, of my debt?"

Juliet paused a moment, and then answered, "'Tis an amount, Madam, much too difficult and complicate for me, just now, to calculate!"

Mr. Giles, alertly rising, cried, " Let me help you, then, my pretty lady, to cast it up. What have you given her upon account, Mrs. Ireton?"

" I am not her book-keeper, Sir!" returned Mrs. Ireton, extremely nettled. " I don't pretend to the honour of acting as her steward! But I trust she will be good enough to take what is her due. 'Tis very much beneath her, I own; extremely beneath her, I confess; yet I hope, this once, she will let herself down so far." And, ten guineas, which she had held in her hand, were augmented to twenty, which she paradingly flung upon the table.

Mrs. Maple and Miss Bydel poured forth the warmest exclamations of admiration at this magnificence; but Juliet, quietly saying, " Let me hope, Madam, that my successor may merit your generosity," again courtsied, and was going: when Mr. Giles, eagerly picking up the money, and following her with it, spread upon his open hand,

said, " What do you go without your cash for, my pretty lady? Why don't you take your guineas?"

" Excuse, excuse me, Sir!" cried Juliet, hastily, and trying to be gone.

" And why?" cried he, a little angrily. " Are they not your own? What have you been singing for, and playing, and reading, and walking? and humouring the little naughty boy? and coddling the cross little dog? Take your guineas, I say! Would you be so proud as to leave the obligation all on the side of Mrs. Ireton?"

A smile at this statement, in defiance of her distress, irresistibly stole its way upon the features of Juliet; while Mrs. Ireton, stung to the quick, though forcing a contemptuous laugh, exclaimed, " This is really the height of the marvellous! It transcends all my poor ideas! I own that! I can't deny that! However, I must drop my acquaintance entirely with Miss Arbe, if it is to subject me to intrusions of every sort, on

pretence of visiting that Miss what's her name! I have had quite enough of all this! I really desire no more."

Harleigh, to hide his acute interest in the situation of Juliet, pretended to be examining a portrait that was hung over the chimney-piece; but Lord Melbury, less capable of self-restraint, applaudingly seized the hand of Mr. Giles, and grasping it warmly, cried, "Where may I have the pleasure of waiting upon you, Sir? I desire infinitely to cultivate your acquaintance."

"And I shall like it too, my good young nobleman," said Mr. Giles, with a look of great satisfaction; and was beginning, at very full length, to give his direction, when Selina called out from the window, as a carriage drove up to the door, "Mrs. Ireton, it's Lord Denmeath's livery."

Lord Melbury, abruptly breaking from Mr. Giles, hurried out of the room; which alone prevented the same action from Juliet, whose face suddenly ex-

hibited horrour rather than affright. But she felt that to fly the uncle, at a moment when she might seem to pursue the nephew, might be big with suspicious mischief; and, though shaking with terrour, she placed herself as if she were examining a small landscape, behind an immense screen, which in summer, as well as in winter, nearly surrounded the sofa of Mrs. Ireton. And hence she hoped, when his lordship should be entered, to steal unnoticed from the room.

"This is a stroke that surpasses all the rest!" faintly cried Mrs. Ireton; "that Lord Denmeath, whom I have not seen these seven ages, should renew his acquaintance at an epoch of such strange disorder in my house! He will never believe this apartment to be mine! it will not be possible for him to believe it. He'll conclude me in some lodging. He'll imagine me the victim of some dreadful reverse of fortune. He is so little accustomed to see me in any motley group! He can so little figure me to himself as a person in a general herd!"

"Well, I, for one, am here by mere accident, to be sure," said Miss Bydel; "but, however, I did not come in from mere curiosity, I assure you, Mrs. Ireton; for I knew nothing of Lord Denmeath's being to come. However, as I happen to be here, I sha'n't be sorry to see his lordship, if I sha'n't be in any body's way, for I never happened to be where he was before. Only I can't think what Lord Melbury went off so quick for; unless it was to shew his uncle the way up stairs. And if it was for that, it was pretty enough of him."

"No, no, you'll be in nobody's way, Mrs. Bydel," said Mr. Giles; "don't be afraid of that. Here's abundance of room for us all. The apartment's a very good apartment for that."

Mrs. Ireton now, impatiently ringing the bell, demanded, of a servant, what he had done with Lord Denmeath; adding, "I should be glad, Sir, to be informed!

very glad, I must confess; for, perhaps, as you have been so good as to shew a visitor of one of my people into the drawing-room, you may have thought proper to usher a visitor of mine into the kitchen?"

His lordship, the servant answered, had been met by Lord Melbury, upon alighting from the coach, and had stept with him into the dining-parlour.

Mrs. Maple exulted that she should now, at last, have an opportunity to clear herself to his lordship, about the many odd appearances which had so long stood against her: while Ireton, who had espied the effort of Juliet to escape notice, called out, "I don't know where the devil I have put my hat;" and suddenly rushing towards her, with a blustrous appearance of search, gave her a mischievous nod, as she started back from his bold approach, and encircled her completely within the broad leaves of the screen.

She suffered this malicious sport in

preference to attempting any resistance; though vexed at the noise which she must now unavoidably make in removing.

She was scarcely thus enclosed, when Lord Denmeath was announced.

Her heart now beat so violently with terrour, that her shaking hand could scarcely grasp a leaf of the screen, as she tried to make an opening for letting herself out, while his lordship was returning a reception of fawning courtesy, by some embarrassed and ambiguous apologies, relative to the motives of his visit. And when, at length, she succeeded, she was deterred from endeavouring to abscond, by seeing Harleigh, with his hand upon the door, making his bow.

Mrs. Maple, interfering, would not permit him to depart; clamorously declaring, that he was the properest person to give an account to his lordship of this adventurer, as he must best know why he had forced them to take such a body into their boat.

With deep agitation, and blushing anxiety, Juliet now unavoidably heard Harleigh answer, "I can but repeat to his lordship what I have a thousand times assured these ladies, that I have not the smallest knowledge whence this young lady comes, nor whom she may be. I can only, therefore, reply to these enquiries from my mental perceptions. These convince me, through progressive observations, that she is a person of honour, well educated, accustomed to good society, highly principled, and noble minded. You smile, my lord! But those only who judge without conversing with her, or converse without drawing forth her sentiments, can annex any disparaging doubt to the mystery of her situation. Her conduct has rather been exemplary than irreproachable from the moment that she has been cast upon our knowledge; though she has suffered, during that short interval, distress of almost every description. Her language is always that of

polished life; her manners, even when her occupations are nearly servile, are invariably of distinguished elegance; yet, with all their softness, all their gentleness, she has a courage that, upon the most trying occasions, is superiour to difficulty; and a soul that, even in the midst of injury or misfortune, depends upon itself, and is above complaint. Such, my lord, I think her! not, indeed, from any certain documents; but from a self-conviction, founded, I repeat, upon progressive observations; which have the weight with me, now, of mathematical demonstration."

Tears resistless, yet benign, flowed down the cheeks of Juliet in listening to this defence; and, while she endeavoured to disperse them, before she ventured from her retreat, Lord Denmeath began an enquiry, whether this young person had regularly refused to say who she was; or whether she had occasionally made any partial communication; or given any hints relative to her family or connexions.

Juliet was now in an agony of mind indescribable. She had hoped to glide away with the general party unobserved; but Harleigh had kept constantly at the door till he made his exit; which, now, was so crowdingly followed by that of every one, except Mrs. Ireton and his lordship, that the delay ended in making her, individually, more conspicuous. Yet, to overhear, unsuspectedly, a conversation believed to be private, even though she knew herself to be its subject, was dishonour: hastily, therefore, though shaking in every limb, she forced herself from without the screen.

Mrs. Ireton shrieked and sunk back upon the sofa, crying out, "Oh, my lord, she's here!—Concealed to listen to us!—What a shock!—I shall feel it these three years!"

Juliet fleetly crossed the drawing-room, without daring to raise her head; but Lord Denmeath, passing quickly before her, as if intending to open the door, held the handle of the lock, while,

steadily examining her as he spoke, he said, " Will you give me leave, Ma'am, to see you for a few minutes to-morrow?"

Juliet made not, nor even attempted to make any answer: terrour was painted in every line of her face, and she trembled so violently, that she was forced to catch by the back of a chair, to save herself from falling.

" I hope, Ma'am," said Lord Denmeath, " you are not ill?" and, approaching her with a look of compassion, added, in a whisper, " I know you!—but be not frightened. I will not hurt you. I will speak to you to-morrow alone, and arrange something to your advantage."

Juliet seemed utterly overcome, and remained motionless.

" Compose yourself," continued Lord Denmeath, speaking louder, and turning towards the wondering Mrs. Ireton; " I will see you when, and where you please to-morrow."

Mrs. Ireton, whose own curiosity

knew not how to brook any delay, now recovered sufficient strength to rise; and, begging that his lordship would not postpone his business, she passed into her boudoir; the door of which, however, Lord Denmeath failed not to remark, was shut without much vigour.

Lowering, therefore, his tone till, even to Juliet, it was scarcely audible, "We cannot," he said, "converse here with any openness; but, if you are not your own enemy, you may make me your friend; though I cannot but take ill your coming over against my advice and injunctions, and thus insidiously introducing yourself to my nephew and niece."

Juliet here looked up, with an air of self-vindication; but Lord Denmeath steadily went on.

"I have for some time suspected who you were, though but vaguely; yet, attributing your voyage to the officious counsel of the Bishop, I contented myself, for the moment, with putting a stop to your

intercourse with my credulous young relations. But other information has reached me; and reached me at the very moment when Mrs. Howel,—when, indeed, my nephew and niece themselves had acquainted me with the meeting at Arundel Castle. I will talk upon all these matters in detail to-morrow morning. I have only to demand, in the interval, that you will neither speak nor write to Lord Melbury. I have already obtained his promise to be quiet till our conference is over. But I know that there are ways and means to induce a young man to forget his engagements. I hope you will try none such. Where can we have our conversation?"

"No where, my lord!" to the utter astonishment of Lord Denmeath, and even to her own, Juliet now, with sudden spirit, answered: but the courage which had been subdued by apprehension, was revived, during the preceding harangue, by strong glowing indignation.

"What is it," when amazement would give him leave to speak, "what is it," Lord Denmeath said, "that you mean?"

"That I will not trouble your lordship to offer me directions that I may not be at liberty to follow. I have already, my lord, a guide; and one to whose judgment I shall submit implicitly. That Bishop, whom your lordship is pleased to call officious, is my first, best, and nearly only friend; and if ever again I should be so blest as to meet with him, his opinion shall be my law,—as his benediction will be my happiness!"

In great emotion, yet with unappalled dignity, she was departing; but Lord Denmeath, with an air of surprize, stopping her, said, "You are then a Papist?"

"No, my lord! I am firmly a Protestant! But, as such, I am a Christian; so, and most piously, yet not illiberally, is the Bishop."

"What is it,—tell me, if you please, that this Bishop purposes? To renew those old claims so long ago vainly canvassed? Can he imagine he will now have more influence than when possessed of his episcopal rank and fortune? Set him right in that point. You will do him a friendly turn. And permit me to do a similar one by yourself. I know the whole of your situation!"

Juliet started.

"I have just had information, which I meant to communicate to you, accompanied with offers of mediation and assistance; but you are sufficient to yourself! or your champion, the Bishop, makes all other aid superfluous! Suffer me, nevertheless, to intimate to you, that you will do well to return, quietly and expeditiously, to the spot whence you came. You may else make the voyage less pleasantly!"

The colour which resentment and exertion had just raised in the cheeks of Juliet, now faded away, and left them

nearly as white as snow. Lord Denmeath, softening his voice and manner, and changing the haughty air of his countenance into something that approached to kindness, went on more gently.

"I did not mean to alarm, but to befriend you. I allow not only for your youth and inexperience, but for the false ideas with which you have been brought up. If it had not pleased the Bishop to interfere, all would have been amicably arranged from the first. Take, however, a little time for reflection. Think upon the enormous risk which you run!—a fine young woman, like you,—and you are, indeed, a very fine young woman; flying from her house and home——"

Juliet, shaking, shuddering, hid her face, and burst into tears.

"I see that it is not impossible to work upon you," he continued; "I will beg Mrs. Ireton, therefore, to let us converse to-morrow where we may canvass the matter at leisure. The road is still

open for you to affluence and credit. It will make me very happy to be your conductor. You will find I am authorized so to be. Make yourself, therefore, as easy as you can, and depend upon my best offices. We will certainly meet to-morrow morning."

He then bowed to her, and moved towards the boudoir; which Mrs. Ireton, appearing accidentally to open the door that had never been shut, quitted, to receive him; while Juliet, in speechless disorder, retired.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

UPON quitting the drawing-room, to mount to her chamber, Juliet caught a glance of Ireton, ascending the stair-case to the second story.

Apprehensive that he was watching for an opportunity to again torment her, she turned into a small apartment called the Print Closet, of which the door was open; purposing there to wait till he should have passed on.

There, however, she had no sooner entered, than, examining the beautiful engravings of Sir Robert Strange, she perceived Harleigh.

Eagerly and with delight he advanced, and sought, once more, to take her hand. A look of solemnity repressed him; but 'twas a solemnity mixt with sorrow, not anger.

" Generous Mr. Harleigh!" she faintly

articulated, while endeavouring to disperse the tears that again strove to find their way down her cheeks; "can you then, thus unabatedly preserve your good opinion of an unknown Wanderer,... who seems the sport of insult and misfortune?"

Almost dissolved with tender feelings at this question, Harleigh, gently overpowering her opposition, irresistibly seized her hand, repeating, "My good opinion? my reverence, rather!—my veneration is yours!—and a confidence in your worth that has no limits!"

Ashamed of the situation into which a sudded impulse of gratitude had involuntarily betrayed her, the varying hues of her now white, now crimson cheeks manifested alternate distress and confusion; while she struggled incessantly to disengage her hand; but the happy heart of Harleigh felt so delightedly its possession, that she struggled in vain.

"Yet, let not that confidence,"

he continued, " be always the offspring of fascination! Give it, at length, some other food than conjecture! not to remove doubts; I have none! but to solve difficulties that rob me of rest.—"

" I am sorry, Sir, very sorry, if I cause you any uneasiness," said Juliet, resuming her usual calmness of manner; yet with bent down eyes, that neither ventured to meet his, nor to cast a glance at the hand which she still fruitlessly strove to withdraw; " but indeed you must not detain me;—no, not a minute!"

Enchanted by the mildness of this remonstrance, little as its injunction met his wishes; " Half a minute, then!" he gaily replied, " accord me only half a minute, and I will try to be contented. Suffer me but to ask,—"

" No, Sir, you must ask me nothing! There is no question whatever I can answer!—"

" I will not make one, then! I will only offer an observation. There is a something—I know not what; nor can I

divine; but something there is strange, singular, — very unusual, and very striking, between you and Lord Melbury! Pardon, pardon my abruptness! You allow me no time to be scrupulous. You promise him your confidence, — that confidence so long, so fervently solicited by another! — so inexorably withheld! —"

"I earnestly desire," cried Juliet, recovering her look of openness, and raising her eyes; "the sanction of Lord Melbury to the countenance and kindness of Lady Aurora."

"Thanks! thanks!" cried Harleigh; who in this short, but expressive explanation, flattered himself that some concern was included for his peace; "'Tis to that, then, that cause, — a cause the most lovely, — he owes this envied preeminence? — And yet, — pardon me! — while apparently only a mediator — may not such a charge, — such an intercourse, — so intimate and so interesting a commission, — may it not, — nay, must it not

inevitably make him from an agent become a principal?—Will not his heart pay the tribute—"

"Heaven forbid!" interrupting him, cried Juliet.

"Thanks! thanks, again! You do not, then, wish it? You are generous, noble enough not to wish it? And frank, sweet, ingenuous enough to acknowledge that you do not wish it? Ah! tell me but—"

"Mr. Harleigh," again interrupting him, cried Juliet, "I know not what you are saying!—I fear I have been misunderstood.—You must let me be gone!"—

"No!" answered he, passionately; "I can live no longer, breathe no longer, in this merciless solicitude of uncertainty and obscurity! You must give me some glimmering of light, some opening to comprehension,—or content yourself to be my captive!—"

"You terrify me, Mr. Harleigh! Let me go!—instantly! instantly!—Would

you make me hate—" She had begun with a precipitance nearly vehement; but stopt abruptly.

"Hate me?" cried Harleigh, with a look appalled: "Good Heaven!"

"Hate you?—No,—not you!...I did not say you!—"

"Who, then? who then, should I make you hate?—Lord Melbury?—"

"O no, never!—'tis impossible!—Let me be gone!—let me be gone!—"

"Not till you tell me whom I should make you hate! I cannot part with you in this new ignorance! Clear, at least, this one little point. Whom should I make hate you?—"

"Myself, Sir, myself!" cried she, trembling and struggling. "If you persist in thus punishing my not having fled from you, at once, as I would have fled from an enemy!"

He immediately let go her hand; but, finding that, though her look was instantly appeased, nay grateful, she was hastily retreating, he glided between her

and the door, crying, " Where, — at least deign to tell me! — Where may I see, — may I speak to you again ?"

" Any where, any where!" — replied she, with quickness; but presently, with a sudden check of vivacity, added, " No where, I mean! — no where, Sir, no where!"—

" Is this possible!" exclaimed he. " Can you, — even in your wishes, — can you be so hard of heart ?"—

" It is you," said she reproachfully, " who are hard of heart, to detain me thus! — Think but where I am!—where you are! — This house — Miss Joddrel — What may not be the consequence? — Is it Mr. Harleigh who would deliver me over to calumny?"

Harleigh now held open the door for her himself, without venturing to reply, as he heard footsteps upon the stairs; but he permitted his lips to touch her arm, for he could not again seize her hand, as she passed him, eagerly, and with her face averted. She fled on to

the stairs, and rapidly ascended them. Harleigh durst not follow; but he pursued her with his eyes. He could not, however, catch a glance, could not even view her profile, so sedulously her head was turned another way. Disappointment and mortification were again seizing him; till he considered, that that countenance thus hidden, had she been wholly unfearful of shewing some little emotion, had probably, nay, even purposely, been displayed.

Fleetly gaining her room, and dropping upon a chair, "I must fly!—I must fly!" she exclaimed. "Danger, here, attacks me in every quarter,—assails me in every shape! I must fly!—I must fly!"

This project, which had its origin in her terrour of Elinor, was now confirmed by the most profound, however troubled meditation. To difficulties of discussion which she deemed insurmountable with Harleigh; to claims of a confidence which she now considered

to be deeply dangerous with Lord Melbury; and to indignities daily, nay, hourly, more insufferable from Mrs. Ireton, were joined, at this moment, the horrour of another interview with Lord Denmeath, still more repugnant to her thoughts, and formidable to her fears.

She refused to descend to the evening-summons of Mrs. Ireton; determining to avoid all further offences from that lady, to whom she had already announced her intended departure; yet she sighed, she even wept at quitting with the same unexplained abruptness Lord Melbury and Harleigh; and the cruel disappointment, mingled with strange surmizes, of the ingenuous Lord Melbury; the nameless consternation, blended with resentful suspence, of the impassioned Harleigh; presented scenes of distress and confusion to her imagination, that occupied her thoughts the whole night, with varying schemes and incessant regret.

When the glimmering of light shewed her that she must soon be gone, she

mounted to a garret, which she knew to be inhabited by a young house-maid, whom she called up; and prevailed upon to go forth, and seek a boy who would carry a parcel to a distant part of the town.

Having thus gotten the street-door open, she guided the boy herself to the inn; where she arrived in time to save her place; and whence she set off for London.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

ESCAPE and immediate safety thus secured, her tender friendship for Gabriella, superseding all fear, and leaving behind all solicitude, made Juliet nearly pronounce aloud, what internally she repeated without intermission, "I come to you, then, at last, my beloved Gabriella!" Cheerful, therefore, was her heart, in defiance of her various distresses: she was quitting Mrs. Ireton, to join Gabriella! — What could be the circumstances that could make such a change severe to Juliet? Juliet, who felt ill treatment more terribly than misfortune; and to whom kindness was more essential than prosperity?

Her journey was free from accident, and void of event. Absorbed in her own ruminations, she listened not to what was said, and scarcely saw by whom

she was surrounded; though her fellow-travellers surveyed her with curiosity, and, from time to time, assailed her with questions.

Arrived at London, she put herself into a hackney-coach; and, almost before her fluttered spirits suffered her to perceive that she had left the inn-yard, she found herself in a haberdasher's shop, in Frith Street, Soho; and in the arms of her Gabriella.

It was long ere either of them could speak; their swelling hearts denied all verbal utterance to their big emotions; though tears of poignant grief at the numerous woes by which they had been separated, were mingled with feelings of the softest felicity at their re-union.

Yet vaguely only Juliet gave the history of her recent difficulties; the history which had preceded them, and upon which hung the mystery of her situation, still remained unrevealed.

Gabriella forbore any investigation, but her look shewed disappointment.

Juliet perceived it, and changed colour. Tears gushed into her eyes, and her head dropt upon the neck of her friend. " Oh my Grabriella !" she cried, " if my silence wounds, or offends you, — it is at an end !"

Gabriella, instantly repressing every symptom of impatience, warmly protested that she would await, without a murmur, the moment of communication; well satisfied that it could be withheld from motives only that would render its anticipation dangerous, if not censurable.

With grateful tears, and tenderest embraces, Juliet expressed her thanks for this acquiescence.

Of Gabriella, the history was brief and gloomy. She had entered into business with as little comprehension of its attributes, as taste for its pursuit; her mind, therefore, bore no part in its details, though she sacrificed to them the whole of her time. Of her son alone she could speak or think. From

her husband she reaped little consolation. Married before the Revolution, from a convent, and while yet a child; according to the general custom of her country, which rarely permits any choice even to the man; and to the female allows not even a negative; chance had not, as sometimes is kindly the case, played the part of election, in assorting the new married couple. Gabriella was generous, noble, and dignified: exalted in her opinions, and full of sensibility: Mr. * * * was many years older than herself, haughty and austere, though brave and honourable; but so cold in his nature, that he was neither struck with her virtues nor her graces, save in considering them as appendages to their mutual rank; nor much moved even by the death of his little son, but from repining that he had lost the heir to his illustrious name. He was now set off, *incognito*, to an appointed meeting with a part of his family, upon the continent.

Again a new scene of life opened to Juliet. The petty frauds, the over-reaching tricks, the plausible address, of the crafty shop-keeper in retail, she had already witnessed: but the difficulties of honest trade she had neither seen nor imagined. The utter inexperience of Gabriella, joined to the delicacy of her probity, made her not more frequently the dupe of the artifices of those with whom she had to deal, than the victim to her own scruples. New to the mighty difference between buying and selling; to the necessity of having at hand more stores than may probably be wanted, for avoiding the risk of losing customers from having fewer; and to the usage of rating at an imaginary value whatever is in vogue, in order to repair the losses incurred from the failure of obtaining the intrinsic worth of what is old-fashioned or faulty; — new to all this, the wary shop-keeper's code, she was perpetually mistaken, or duped, through ignorance of ignorance,

which leads to hazards, unsuspected to be hazards.

Repairs for the little shop were continually wanted, yet always unforeseen; taxes were claimed when she was least prepared to discharge them; and stores of merchandize accidentally injured, were obliged to be sold under prime cost, if not to be utterly thrown away.

Unpractised in every species of business, she had no criterion whence to calculate its chances, or be aware of its changes, either from varying seasons or varying modes; and to all her other intricacies, there was added a perpetual horrour of bankruptcy, from the difficulty of accelerating payment for what she sold, or of procrastinating it for what she bought.

Every embarrassment, however, at this period, was accommodated by Juliet; who had the exquisite satisfaction not only to bring to her beloved friend personal consolation, but solid and effectual comfort. The purse of Lord Melbury,

which Juliet would only consider as the loan of Lady Aurora, was but little lightened by the small expences of the short journey from Brighthelmstone; and all that remained of its contents were instantly assigned to relieving the most painful of the distresses of Gabriella, those in which others were involved through her means.

Gabriella, with a grace familiar, if not peculiar, to her nation, of sharing, without the confusion of false pride, the offerings of tender friendship, or generous sympathy, accepted with noble frankness the assistance thus proposed; though Juliet again was obliged to hide her face from the enquiring eye, that seemed strangely to wonder whence this resource arose, and why its spring was concealed.

Juliet now became a partner in all the occupations and cares of her friend: together they prepared the shop for their customers every morning, and decked it out to attract passers bye;

together they examined and re-arranged their goods every night; cast up their accounts, deposited sums for their creditors, and entered claims into their books for their debtors: together they sat in the shop, where one served and waited upon customers, and the other aided the household economy by the industry of her needle. Yet, laborious as might seem this existence to those who had known "other times," Juliet, by the side of Gabriella, thought every employment delightful; Gabriella, in the society of Juliet, felt every exertion lightened, and every sorrow softened.

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

THUS, in manual toil, yet mental comfort, had passed a week, when one morning, while the usual commissioner for carrying about goods happened to be out of the way, a lady from Soho Square sent, in great haste, an order for some ribbons. Juliet, to save a customer to her friend, proposed supplying the commissioner's place; and set forth for that purpose, with a little band-box in her hands, and a large black bonnet drawn over her eyes. But before she reached the square, she overtook two men who were loitering on, as leisurely as she was tripping diligently, and the words, "You'll never know her again, I promise you; she's turned out quite a beauty!" struck her ears, from a voice which she recollected to be that of Mr. Riley.

Anxious to avoid being recognized by him, she crossed to the other side of the street, with a precipitance that caused the cover of her band-box, which she had neglected to fasten, to slip aside, and most of her stores to roll in the dust.

While, with great dismay, she sought to recover them, a feeble, but eager voice, from a carriage, which suddenly stopt, ordered a footman to descend and assist the young lady.

Not without confusion, Juliet perceived to whom she owed so uncommon a civility; it was to her old friend and admirer Sir Jaspar Herrington. She collected her merchandize, courtsied her thanks, but looked another way, and hurried back to her new home.

She related her adventure to Gabriella, with whom she bemoaned the mischief that had befallen the ribbons; and who now determined to spare her friend any further hazard of unwelcome encounters, by carrying herself what yet remained unsoiled of the pieces, to Soho Square.

Juliet had barely time to install herself as mistress of the small warehouse, when she saw, through the window, the carriage of Sir Jaspar; at the same time, that a young woman opened the shop-door, and demanded a drachm of black sewing silk, and a yard of tape.

While Juliet with difficulty found, and with embarrassment prepared to weigh the first, and to measure the second, the Baronet, with a curious, but respectful air, entering, and hobbling towards the counter, desired to look at some ribbons.

Juliet, however vexed, could not refrain from smiling; but, through confusion, joined to the novelty of her office, she doubled the weight of her silk, and the measure of her tape, yet forgot to ask to be paid for either; and her customer, whether from similar forgetfulness, or from reluctance to mark the new shopkeeper's ignorance of business, walked off without seeming to notice this inattention.

Sir Jaspar, then, gravely repeated his request to be shewn some ribbons.

Juliet began now to hope that she had not been recollected by the Baronet. Shading her face, therefore, still lower with her large bonnet, she produced a drawer of black ribbons; concluding that what he required must be for his queue, or for his shoe-strings.

No, he said, black would not do: the colour that he wanted was brown.

In a low voice that strove to disguise itself, she answered that she had no other colour at home.

He would stay till some other were returned, then, he said; and, composedly seating himself, and taking out his snuff-box, he added, that he did not want plain brown ribbons, but ribbons speckled, spotted, or splashed with brown.

Juliet who could now no longer doubt being known to him, made no reply; though again, irresistibly, she smiled.

To the Baronet her smile was always enchantment; setting aside, therefore,

any further pretence to strangeness, he leant his hands upon the counter, and peering archly under her bonnet, said, "'Tis you, indeed, then, sweet sorceress? And what sylph is it, — or what imp? — dulcet, or malignant!—that has drawn me again into the witchery of your charms?"

He then poured forth countless enquiries into her situation, her projects, and her sentiments; but, all proving fruitless, he pathetically lamented the luckless meeting; and frankly owned, that he had brought himself to a resolution of seeing her no more. "The rude assault," said he, "made upon my feelings by those mundane harpies at Arundel-castle, removed a bandage from 'my mind's eye' that had veiled me to myself, and shewed me that I was an old fool caught in the delusions of love and beauty! I could parry no raillery, I could brave no suspicion, I could retort no sneer! Panic-struck and disordered, I stole away, like a gentle Philander of

Arcadia, my head drooping upon my left shoulder, my eyes cast down upon the ground, with every love-lorn symptom, — except youth, which alone offers their apology! I spent the rest of the day in character with this opening; mute with my servants; loquacious in soliloquy; quarrelling with my books; and neglecting my dinner! Sleepless and sighing, I repaired to my solitary couch; lost to every idea of existence, but what pointed out to me how, when, and where I might again behold my lovely enchantress. Shall I tell you how it was I recovered, at last, my senses?"

"If you think the lesson may be useful to me, Sir Jaspar! —"

"Ah, cruel! 'He jests at scars who never felt a wound.' Mark, however, the visions by which I have been tutored. The servants gone, the lights removed, and the world's bustle superseded by stillness, darkness, and solitude, — then, when my fancy meant to revel in smiles, dimples, sweet looks, and recreative

wiles, then, — what a transformation from hope and enjoyment, to shame and derision! I no sooner closed my poor eyes, than an hundred little imps of darkness scrambled up my pillow. How was I tweaked, jirked, and jolted! Mumbled, jumbled, and pinched! Some of them encircled my eye-balls, holding mirrours in each hand. They spoke not; the mirrours were all eloquent! You think, they expressed, of a young girl? Behold here what a young girl must think of you! Others jammed my lean, lank arms into a machine of whalebone, to strengthen and invigorate them for offering support, in cases of difficulty or danger, to my fair one: others fastened elastic strings to my withered neck and shoulders, to enable me, by little pulleys, to raise my head, after every obsequious reverence to my goddess. Crowds of the nimblest footed dived their little forked fingers into my heart, plucking up by the root sober contentment and propriety; and pum-

melling into their places restlessness, jealousy, and suspicion: mocking me when they had done, by peeping into my ears, and squeaking out, with merry tittering, See! see! see! what sickly rubbish the old dotard has got in his crazy noddle!"

Juliet again smiled, but so faintly, from uncertainty to what this fantastic gallantry might tend, that Sir Jaspar, looking at her with concern, said, "How's this, my dainty Ariel? Why so serious a brow? Have some of my nocturnal visitants whisked themselves through the key-hole of your chamber-door, also? And have they tormented your fancy with waking visions of fearful omens? Spurn them all! sweet syren! What can the tricks and malice of hobgoblins, or even the freaks and vagaries of fortune itself, enact against youth, beauty, and health such as yours? Give me but such arms, and I will brave the wayward sisters themselves."

More seriously, then, "Alas!" he

cried, "what is it, thus mystic, yet thus attractive, that allures me whether I will or not into your chains?—Could I but tell who, or what you are,—besides being an angel,—it is possible there might occur some idea,—some—some little notion of means to exorcise the wicked familiars that severally annoy us. Tell me but under what semblance the pigmy enemies invade you? Whether, as usual, with the darts of Master Cupid, shot, furiously, into your snowy bosom, or—"

"No, no, no!"

"Or whether by the bags of Plutus, emptied, furtively, from your strong box? In the first case,—little as my bosom is snowy!—I should but too well know how to pity; in the second, I should be proud and honoured to serve you. Tell me, then, who you are, resistless paragon! and you shall wander no more in this nameless state, an exquisite, but nearly visionary being! Tell me but who you are,

and I will protect you, myself, with my life and fortune!"

Alarmed by this warmth, and doubtful whether it demanded gratitude or resentment, Juliet was silent.

"If you will not reveal to me your history," he resumed, "you will, at least, not refuse to let me divine it? I am a famous star-gazer; and, if once I can discover your ruling planet, I shall prognosticate your destiny in a second. Let me, then, read the lines of your face. Nay! you must not hide it! You must give me fair play. Or, shall I examine the palm of your hand?"

Juliet laughed, but drew on her gloves.

"O you little Tyrant! I must only, then, catch, as I can, a glimpse of your countenance. A nauseous task, enough, to dwell on any thing so ugly! All I can make out from it, just now, is the figure of a coronet."

"A coronet?"

"Yes; under which I perceive the

cypher D. Do you know any thing of any nobleman whose name begins with a D? I cannot decipher the rest of the letters, except that the last is—I think,—an h."

Juliet started.

"My art, I must, however, own, is at a stand, to discover whether this nobleman may be a lover or a kinsman. To discern that, the general lines of the face are inadequate. I must investigate the eyes."

Juliet pertinaciously looked down.

"How now, my dainty Ariel? Will you give me no answer? neither verbal nor visual? Will you not even tell me whether I must try to make the old peer my advocate, or whether I must run him through the body? Surely you won't let me court him as of kin if he be a rival? nor pink him as a rival if he be of kin?

"He is neither, I can assure you, Sir: he is nothing to me whatsoever."

"You know, at least, then, it seems, whom I mean?"

" Sir ?"

" My tiny elves have not here deluded me? I am always afraid lest those merry little wags should be playing me some prank. But it is you who are the wicked Will o' the Wisp, that lures all others, yet never can be lured yourself! Lord Denmeath has really, then, and in sober truth, the happiness of some way belonging to you ?"

" No, Sir; — you mistake me; — I never —" She left her phrase unfinished.

" Shall I relate what the prattling tell-tales have blabbed to me further? They pretend that Lord Denmeath ought himself to be your protector; but that he is so void of taste, so empty of sentiment, that he seeks to disguise, if not disown, an affinity that, with more liberal ideas, he would exult in as an honour."

" Who talked of affinity, Sir ?" cried Juliet, with quickness irrepressible.— " Was it Lord Denmeath ? — Did he name me to you ?"

" Name you ? Has any one named

you? Indefinable, unconquerable, unfathomable Incognita! Has any one presumed to give you a human genealogy? Are you not straight descended from the clouds? without even taking the time to change yourself first into a mortal? Explain, expound, unravel to me, in soft pity—"

Juliet solemnly entreated him to forbear any further interrogatory, assuring him that all enquiry gave her pain.

"Then shall 'the stars,'" cried he, "'fade away, the sun grow dim, and nature,'—like my poor old carcass!—'sink in years,' ere one grain more of the favourite attribute of our general mother shall be sown in my discourse! But you, in all things marvellous! You! have you really, and *bona fide*, so little in your composition of our naughty mamma, as not even to desire to know in what shape appeared to me the tattling little elf, that talked to me of Lord Denmeath?"

"You have not then, Sir, seen him?"

" Or if I had?—twenty interviews would not have initiated me into his affairs with so much promptitude, as twenty minutes sufficed for doing with my elfin fay."

" I conjecture, then, Sir, your informant: Miss Selina Joddrel?"

" Even so. Upon determining to quit Brighthelmstone, three or four days ago, I drove over to Lewes, to offer what apologies I could suggest to Mrs. Maple, for the vagaries of my hopeful nephew and heir,—who is suddenly set out for Constantinople in search, as he writes me word, of a fair Circassian! The last of my designs, in so delicate a case, you will easily believe, was to embarrass the injured and deserted fair one by my sight. But she had a fortitude far above my precautions. She flew to me herself; and her own plaintive tale had no sooner been bemoaned, than she hastened to favour me with the history of the whole house. I then learnt your sudden disappearance; and heard, with extreme sa-

tisfaction, from the indignation I had felt in seeing your ill treatment, that my meek sister-in-law had fallen into fits, from the first shock of finding that you were no longer under her dominion. My Lord Denmeath, who had already gone through the ceremonial of demanding Mrs. Maple's permission to obtain a private audience with you, seemed thunderstruck at the news, that the bird he so much wished to sing to him was flown. The whole house was in disorder; running, enquiring, asserting, denying; — the wild Elinor alone was tame and tranquil, — for Mr. Harleigh has kept constantly in sight."

Delicate, and ever feeling Harleigh! thought Juliet; Her life, and My reputation, hang suspended upon the same guardian care!

"That eccentric and most original personage," continued Sir Jaspar, "has now wholly made over her mind to the study of controversial theology. Every chair is covered with polemical tracts, to prove one side of an argument, that

every table is covered to disprove on the other. If she settle her opinions one way, she will probably become the foundress of some new-fangled monastery; if on the other, she will be discovered, some star-light night, seeking truth at the bottom of a well."

Juliet then anxiously enquired into the state of her health.

" She seems to me," answered the Baronet, " quite as well as it is possible for a person to be, who is afflicted with the restless malady of struggling for occasion to exhibit character; instead of leaving its display to the jumble of nature and of accident. But these new systemers do not break out of bounds more wildly from whim, than they afterwards seek retreat within them, tamely, from experience. The little Selina, on the contrary, who has escaped the trouble of supporting a character, by not having an idea that could form one, had the kindness to make me the most liberal communication of every thing that she

has either seen or heard, since she has been skipping about in this nether world; and, in her scampers from room to room, and from person to person, she had gathered sundry interesting particulars of a certain fair unknown.——"

He paused; looked anxious, and then went on.

"I would not be officious,—impertinent, nor importunate,—yet, could I but ascertain some points.—If, however, you will not unfold to me your history, will you, at least,—syren of syrens!—to develop why I demand it, hear me divulge my own?"

Juliet, surprised and amused, gratefully assented.

"Know, then, my fair torment! it pleased my wise progenitors to entail my estate upon my next of kin, in case I should have no lineal heir. Brought up with the knowledge of this restriction to the fantasies of my future will, I conceived an early suspicion that my younger brother built sundry vain-glo-

rious castles upon my celibacy; and I determined not to reach my twentieth year before I put an end to his presumption. The first idea, therefore, that fastened upon my mind was that of marriage. But as I entertained a general belief, that I should every where be accepted from mercenary motives, I viewed all females with the scrutiny of a bargain-maker. Thankless for any mark of partiality, difficult even to absurdity, I sought new faces with restless impatience; modestly persuaded that I ought to find a companion without a blot! yet, whatever was my success, regularly making off from every fair charmer, after the second interview, through the fear of being taken in."

"And were none of your little sylphs, Sir, at hand, to point out to you some one who was disinterested in her nature, however inferiour in her fortune?"

"No! alas! no; my sylphs all reserved themselves for my meeting with

you! The wicked little imps who then guided and goaded me, incited me to suspect and to watch every thing that seemed lovely or amiable; and the pranks that they played me were endless. They urged me to pursue the glowing Beauty, whose vivid cheeks, crimsoned by the dance, had warmed all my senses at a ball, to her alighting from her carriage, at her return home, with the livid hue of fatigue and moonlight! They instigated me to surprize, when ill-dressed, negligent, and spiritless, the charmin[illegible] and form that, skilfully adorned, [illegible] appeared to me Venus attired by [illegible]aces. They twitched me on to dart [illegible] another, whose bloom had seemed [illegible] opening of the rose-bud, just as an unto[illegible] accident had rubbed off, from one cheek, the sweet pink which remained undiminished upon the other! And when, tired of the deceptions of beauty, I would only follow merit, the wanton little sprites suggested detections still more mischievous.

They led me to overhear the softest of maidens insult a poor dependent; they shewed me a pattern of discretion, secretly involved in debt; and the frankest of human lasses, engaged in a clandestine affair! They whisked me, in short, into every crevice of female subtlety. They exhibited all as a drama, and gave me a peep behind the curtain to see the gayest damsel the sulkiest; the most pleasing one, the most spiteful; the delicate one, obstreperous; the bashful one, bold; the generous one, niggardly; and the humble one, a tyrant!"

"Oh wicked imps, indeed, Sir Jaspar! What a view of poor human nature have they deformed for you! And how have you preserved such a stock of philanthropy, while instigated by so much malignity?"

"Alas, my fair love, my history is but that of half the old bachelors existing! We pay, by our aged facility and good humour, for our youthful severity

and impertinence! and, after having wasted our early life in conceiving that no one is good enough for us, we consume our latter days in envy of every married man! Now—all too late! I never see a lovely young creature, but my heart calls out what a delicious wife she would make me! were I younger, without reflection, without enquiry, were I younger, I would marry her! Then—when such precipitation might have been pardonable, some difficulty instantly followed the sight of whatever was attractive: one had not fortune enough for my expectations; another, had beauty to make me eternally jealous; another, though charming, was too old to be formed to my taste; another, though lovelier still, was too young to be judged. One was too wise, and might hold me cheap; another was too simple, and might expose me to seeing her held cheap herself. Then—I was so plaguely nice! Now, alas! I am so cursedly easy!"

"Your sylphs, elves, and imps, Sir,

or, in other words, your humour and imagination, must seek some counterpoise, and not always, you see, be trusted uncontrouled."

"You are right, my wise charmer! but we never arrive at judgment, the only counterpoise to our fancies, till we cease to want it! When we are young, in the midst of the world, and in pursuit of beauty, riches, honours, power, fame, or knowledge, then, when judgment would either guide us to success, or demolish our senseless expectations, it keeps aloof from us like a stern stranger: and will only hail us as an intimate, when we have no longer any occasion for its services! Of what value is judgment to a gouty old codger, who sits just as snugly over his fire-side, whether his opinions are erroneous or oracular? who wraps himself just as warmly in flannel, whether the world go ill or go well? and who, if, by ignorance or mismanagement, he be cheated, loses only what he cannot enjoy! I first became

aware of my folly, by the folly of my nephew. When he was sent forth into the world, my decided—alas!—heir, I told him my case; and urged him to a rational but quick choice, to obviate a similar punishment to fantastical difficulties. He listened, according to the usage of youth, to half what I said; and, adopting only my mistrust, was inattentive to its result; and thus so caricatured my researches, suspicions, and irresolutions, that he has rendered them and myself, even in my own eyes, completely ridiculous. 'Tis a most piteous circumstance that a man can be young only once in his life! Could I but, with my present experience, lop off thirty or forty years of my age,—ah! fair seducer!—how would the desire of giving you pleasure, the fear of causing you pain, the wish to see your face always beaming with smiles——

Juliet arose to interrupt him; but whither could she go? She again sat down.

The Baronet also arose; and stood for some minutes, covering his eyes with one hand, in deep rumination. Re-seating himself, then, with an air of the most lively satisfaction, "I have told you," he cried, "now, my history. You see in me a whimsical, but contrite old bachelor; whose entailed estate has lost to him his youth, by ungenerous mistrust: but who would gladly devote the large possessions which have fallen to him collaterally, to making the rest of his existence companionable. Shrink not, sweet flower! I mean nothing that can offend you. Tell me but who you are, and, be you whom you may, if you will accept an old protector; if you will deign to become his friend; to give him your conversation, your society, your lovely presence; he will despise the mocking world—and decorate himself for your bridegroom, by a marriage settlement of the whole of his unintailed estate."

Astonished, and uncertain whether he

were serious, Juliet was beginning a playful attack upon his fairy elves; but, stopping her with perturbed earnestness, "Will you," he cried, "accept me? Your beauty, your difficulties, your distresses; your exquisite looks, and witching manners; with my solitude, my repugnance to mercenary watchers, my deep regrets, and my desire of domestic commerce; unite to devote me to you for ever; provided, only I can catch a grain, a single grain, of gentle good will! Give me, then, but this one satisfaction —I ask no more! tell me but whence it comes that, thus formed, thus accomplished, thus wise, thus lovely,—you are helpless, dependent, indigent, and a Wanderer?"

Juliet, though no longer able to doubt his meaning, and though not disposed to suspect his sincerity, felt, nevertheless, shocked by such an investigation; though grateful, and even touched by his singular and romantic proposal. Delicacy, however, which keeps back acknow-

ledged belief in unrequited partiality, as scrupulously as it is withheld by timid consciousness, where the partiality is returned; made her again have recourse to his visionary friends, in order to parry a serious reply; but, too much in earnest to submit to any delay, the Baronet, ejaculating, "Paragon of the world!" was bending over the counter, in an attempt to take her hand; when the sudden opening of the shop-door, which he had himself carefully closed, previous to his declaration, made him draw back, in the utmost confusion; to recover his seat and his crutches, and again demand to look at some ribbons.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

GABRIELLA, who had thus long been detained from her business, because the lady, whose orders she had obeyed, had either forgotten that those orders had been issued, or deemed that to wait in an anti-room was the natural fate of an haberdasher; now, entering the shop, saw, with no little surprize, Juliet in close conference with an old beau, who was evidently disconcerted, and embarrassed by the interruption. Remitting, however, all enquiry, and gracefully declining a chair, which was respectfully offered to her by Sir Jaspar, who imagined her to be some customer; she silently employed herself in examining and arranging her unpinned, unrolled, and tumbled ribbons.

The surprize of the Baronet, now, became greater than her own. No

plainness of attire could hide, from his scrutinizing eye, a certain native taste with which her habiliments, however simple, were put on; nor could even the band-box which she held in her hand, and which he had supposed to be there from some accident, disguise the elegance of her motions, or conceal her lofty mien. When, therefore, he discovered that she was at home, and that she was an haberdasher, he looked from one lovely companion to the other, with reverential wonder, and uplifted hands. Long profoundly impressed by the beauty of Juliet, by her merit, her youth, her modest yet dignified demeanour, in the midst of all the difficulties of distressed poverty; he was now as powerfully affected by the appearance of Gabriella; whose noble, yet never haughty manners, joined to a tragic expression of constant woe in her countenance, rendered her if not as attractive, at least as interesting as her friend.

A general pause ensued, till Gabriella,

fearing that she was obtrusive, retired to the inner room.

Sir Jaspar, wide opening his eyes, and again leaning forward, to hear more distinctly, exclaimed, "Who is that fine creature? What a majestic port! Yet how sweet a look! She awes while she invites! Who is she?"

Juliet felt enchanted; she even felt exalted by a testimony so impartial and so honourable, to the merit of her friend, and she eagerly answered, "Your admiration, Sir, does honour to your discernment. Her excellencies, her high qualities, and spotless conduct, might make the proudest Englishman exult to own her for his country-woman; though the lowest Frenchman would dispute, even at the risk of his life, the honour of her birth. Sprung from one of the first houses of Europe, a house not more ancient in its origin, than renowned for its virtues; allied to a family the most illustrious, whose military glory has raised it to the highest ranks in the state; herself an ornament to that birth, an

honour to that alliance; she sustains a reverse of fortune, which reduces her from every indulgence to every privation, with a calm courage that keeps her always mistress of herself, and enables her to combat evil by labour, misery by industry! And which never has failed her, but in a personal, bosom affliction, that would equally have shaken her fortitude, in the brightest splendour of prosperity!—"

"Hold! hold, you little torment!" interrupted Sir Jaspar. "You don't consider what an artillery my wanton sprites are bringing upon me! My poor gouty fingers are so mumbled and pinched, and tweaked, to hurry me to get at my purse, that I cannot catch hold of it for very tremour!—"

"Oh no, Sir Jaspar, no! What she earns, however hardly and however humbly, she thankfully reaps; but she could only submit to accept alms, if bowed down by age, by malady, or by incapacity for work. Yet this spirit is not pride; 'tis but a strong and refined

sense of propriety; since from a friend, in the tender persuasion, that participation of fortune ought to be leagued with participation of sentiment, she would candidly receive whatever would not injure that friend to bestow."

"Divinest of little mortals!" cried Sir Jaspar. "What whimsey is it, what astonishing whimsey of 'the sisters three,' that can have nailed to a counter two such delectable beings, to weigh pins and needles, and measure tapes and bobbins? And how,—beautiful witch! with charms, graces, accomplishments, talents such as yours, how is it you submit to such base drudgery in 'durance vile,' without even making a wry face? without a scowl upon your eye-brow, or a grumble from your throat?"

"Can you look, Sir, at her whom you call my partner, and think of me? She has lost her country; she wastes in exile; she sinks in obscurity; she has no communication with her friends; she knows not even whether they yet breathe

the vital air!—nevertheless she works, she sustains herself by her industry and ingenuity; and repines only that she has not still another, has not her loved and lovely infant to sustain also!—and I, shall I complain?—Offspring of a race the most dignified, she toils manually, not to degrade it mentally;—and I, shall I blush to owe my subsistence to my exertions?"

Tears now flowed fast down her cheeks, while the crutches dropt from the feeble hands of the penetrated Baronet, whose eyes, dimmed by compassion, were fastened upon the face of the lovely mourner, when Gabriella re-appeared.

In deep amazement and concern, she hesitated whether she should come forward, to offer comfort; or whether, as she now concluded the old gentleman to be some intimate friend, she ought not again to retire; but Juliet entreated her to return to her place. She resumed, therefore, her business of restoring her ribbons to order; dejectedly announcing,

that nothing had been bought; though every thing had been examined, deranged, and tossed about.

Sir Jaspar now, courteously waving his hand, smilingly addressed himself to Gabriella, saying, "'Tis my good Genius, Ma'am, make no doubt of it, that has run away with the feeling of those people you mention! For my good Genius, I must beg you to observe, has frequently taken lessons of the god Mercury, and is nearly as adroit in petty larceny as his godship himself. I should not, therefore, wonder, if, in his eagerness to serve me, he had pilfered from those poor souls, who have used you so ill, every grain he could pick up of decency! For, knowing that ribbons are a commodity of which I want a prodigious stock, he would not suffer your assortment to be diminished, till I had had the pleasure of making my bargains."

He then selected the piece of ribbon which seemed the most considerable, and desired to have it measured.

Gabriella obeyed, not more amazed than Juliet felt amused.

But, when a similar order was given, for ascertaining the quantity of a second piece, and then of a third; Juliet, though delighted at the pleased looks of Gabriella, and charmed with the generosity of the Baronet, began to apprehend, that she might herself be supposed to incur some debt of gratitude for this liberality. She retreated, therefore, with her needle-work, to the adjoining little room.

In a few minutes, she was followed by Gabriella; who, uneasily, asked what she must do with this magnificent old beau, who still while she measured one piece of ribbon, employed himself in selecting another; and who, though so gallant that he never spoke without a compliment, was so respectful, that it was not possible to check him by any serious reproof.

Juliet disclaimed taking any share in his present munificence; yet owned that

she had an ancient obligation to him that she was unable, at this moment, to repay; and which, from the delicacy with which it had been conferred, and the seasonable relief which it had procured her, would merit her lasting gratitude. He was brother-in-law, she added, to the lady with whom she had lately resided; and he was as rich as he was benevolent.

Her scruples, then, Gabriella said, were at an end. Juliet, therefore, begged that she would endeavour to enter into conversation with him concerning Brighthelmstone; and try to obtain some particulars relative to the party at Mrs. Ireton's.

"I began to fear you had flown away, Ma'am," said Sir Jaspar, upon Gabriella's re-entrance into the shop; "and I was much less surprised than concerned; for I had already surmized that you were an angel; though I had failed to remark your wings."

He then put into her hand three more

pieces of ribbon, which he had chosen during her absence.

Gabriella, who understood English well, though she spoke it imperfectly, made her answers in French.

Having now given her ample employment, he sat down to examine, or, rather, to admire at his ease, the lightness and grace with which she executed her office; saying, "You are not, perhaps, aware, Madam, that there are certain little beings, nameless and invisible, yet active and penetrating, perpetually hovering around us, who have let me a little into your history; and have taken upon them to assure me that you were not precisely brought up to be a shop-keeper? How, then, is it that you have jumbled thus together such heterogeneous materials of existence? leaguing high birth with low life? superiour rank with vulgar employment; and grace, taste, and politeness with common drudgery? How, in short, born and bred to be dangled after by your vassals, and to lollop, the

live-long-day, upon sofas and arm-chairs, have you acquired the necessary ingredients for being metamorphosed into a tidy little haberdasher?"

Gabriella, concluding that her situation had been made known to him by Juliet, answered, in a melancholy tone, "Is this a period, Sir, to consider punctilio? Alas! whence I come, all that are greatest, most ancient, and most noble *, have learnt, that self-exertion can alone mark nobility of soul; and that self-dependence only can sustain honour in adversity. Alas! whence I come, the first youth is initiated in the view, if not in the endurance of misfortune! There can be no understanding, or there must be early reflection; there can be no heart, or there must be commiserating sympathy!"

"I protest, Ma'am," cried Sir Jaspar, looking at her with astonishment, "I begin to suspect that I came into the world only this morning! Where I

* The period is the reign of Robespierre.

may have been rambling, all these years, in the persuasion I was in it already, I have by no means any clear notion! But to see two such instances of wisdom and resignation, united with youth and beauty, makes me believe myself in some new region, never yet visited by vice or folly."

"Ah, Sir, the French Revolution has opened our eyes to a species of equality more rational, because more feasible, than that of lands or of rank; an equality not alone of mental sufferings, but of manual exertions. No state of life, however low, or however hard, has been left untried, either by the highest, or by the most delicate, in the various dispersions and desolation of the ancient French nobility. And to see,—as I, alas! have seen,—the willing efforts, the even glad toil, of the remnants of the first families of Europe, to procure,—not luxuries, not elegancies, not even comforts,—but maintenance! mean, laborious maintenance!—to preserve,—

not state, not fortune, not rank,—but life itself! but simple existence!"—

"Very wonderful personage!" cried Sir Jaspar, his air mingling reverence with amazement; "and what,—unfold to me, I beg, what is the necromancy through which you support, under such toils, your intellectual dignity? and strangle, in its birth, every struggle of false shame?"

"Alas, Sir, I have seen guilt!—Since then, I have thought that shame belonged to nothing else!"

The eyes of Sir Jaspar were now suffused with tender admiration. "Fair deity of the counter!" he cried, "you are sublime! And she, too,—your witching little hand-maid; by what kind dulcet chance,—new in the annals o misfortune,—have two such wonders met?—"

"Ah, rather, Sir,—since you couple us so kindly,—rather ask by what adverse chance we have so long been separated?"

"You have known her, then, some time?"

"We were brought up together!—the same convent, the same governess, the same instructors, were common to both till my marriage. And now, again, —as before that period,—I have not the most distant idea of any possible happiness, that is not annexed to her presence."

Touched to hear the word happiness once again, even though with such sadness, pronounced by Gabriella; yet alarmed at a discourse that might lead, inadvertently, to some secret history, Juliet was returning, to stop any further detail; when, upon Sir Jaspar's answering, "Sweet couple! Lord Denmeath, who ought at least, if I understand right, —to take care of one of you, will surely make it his business that you should coo together in the same cage?"—she again retreated, anxious to learn what this meant, and hoping that he would become more explicit.

"Lord Denmeath?" repeated Gabriella, "If you know Lord Denmeath, you may be better informed upon this subject than I am myself. Was it at Brighthelmstone that you met with his lordship?"

"It was at Brighthelmstone that I heard of him; and heard that, though wary of speech, he has been incautious in manner, and left little doubt upon the minds of his observers, that this fair flower springs from the same stock as some part of his own family; though she may be one of those sweet, but hapless buds, whose innocence pays for the guilt of its planter.—"

"No, Sir, no!" Gabriella precipitately interrupted him; "the birth of my friend is unstained, though unequal; the marriage of her parents was legal, though secret. Her mother came not, indeed, from an ancient race; but she was a pattern of virtue, as well as a model of beauty. Could it, indeed, be believed, that a young nobleman of such

expectations, in every way, as those of the Earl of Melbury's only son, Lord Granville, would have given his hand to the orphan and destitute daughter of an insolvent man of business, had she not possessed every advantage, nay, every perfection to which human nature can rise?"

Affrighted by this so open relation, drawn forth involuntarily from the nobly ingenuous Gabriella, in the persuasion that Sir Jaspar was already a confidential, and might become a useful friend; Juliet, in the first moment, was advancing to stop it; but her heart, yet more than her ear, was so fascinated by the generous eulogy of her virtuous, though lowly mother, from the offspring of a house whose height, and natal prejudices, might have palliated, upon this subject, the language even of disdain; that she could not prevail with herself to break into what she considered as sacred praise.

"'Tis even so, then!" cried Sir

Jaspar, with smiling delight; "this forlorn, but most beautiful Wanderer,—this so long concealed, and mysterious, but most lovely *incognita*, is the daughter of the late Lord Granville, and the grand-daughter of the late Earl of Melbury!"

Utterly confounded, to hear the secret history of her birth and family thus casually, yet irretrievably discovered, Juliet, trembling, again shrunk back; yet would not, now, and unavailingly, check the ardent zeal of her high-minded friend, since without any added danger, it might procure some useful intelligence.

The willing Baronet, whose sole desire was to keep up the conversation, wanted no urging to relate all that he had gathered from the loquacious Selina. Lord Denmeath, upon the sudden disappearance of Miss Ellis, had been surprised into confessing, that he had a faint notion that he knew something of that young person; that there

had been, once, an odd story, — a report — that a young woman was existing in France, who was some way belonging to the late Lord Granville, his sister's husband; though without ever having been acknowledged by the family. He let fall, also, sundry obscure hints of information, of the most serious import, which he had recently received, relating to this young woman; but which he would not divulge, till he had investigated; as he began to surmise, that it had been conveyed to him for some fraudulent and mercenary purpose. Mrs. Ireton, to all this, had answered, that she had suspected, from the beginning, that the creature was an adventurer; and that she was now fully convinced that they had been played upon by a supposititious person. Lord Denmeath, though he forbore confirming this assertion, listened to it with a smile of concurrence.

Juliet here felt shocked and confounded; but Gabriella, animated by

generous resentment, warmly repeated her asseverations, of the validity of the marriage of Lord Granville with Miss Powel, her friend's mother; though an excess of fear of the inflexible character of the old Earl Melbury had prevented its early avowal; and the death of the concealed wife, while Juliet was yet in arms, had afterwards decided the young widower to guard the secret, till his child should be grown up; or till he should become his own master.

"But where, during this interval," said Sir Jaspar, "where, — and what was the hiding-place of that seraphic offspring?"

Till her seventh year, Gabriella answered, she had been consigned to the care of Mrs. Powel, her maternal grandmother; who, satisfied of the legality, had herself aided the secresy of the marriage. They had dwelt, during that period, in the same picturesque, but no longer loved retreat, upon the banks of the Tyne, in which Lady Granville, un-

der a feigned name, had been concealed, for the short space of time between her marriage and her death.

Juliet, whose intention had been to gather, not to bestow intelligence, now came forward, and made signs to Gabriella to drop the subject. But this was no longer practicable. Urged by the idea of doing honour to her friend, and incited by adroit interrogatories, or piquant observations, from Sir Jaspar, Gabriella, having insensibly begun the tale, felt irresistibly impelled to make clear the birth and family of Juliet, beyond all doubt or cavil. She continued, therefore, the narration; and Juliet, much agitated, retreated wholly to the inner room.

Under pretence of change of air for his health, Lord Granville, to hide his grief from his father and friends, spent the first year of his widowhood at Montpellier; then the residence of the Bishop of * * *, the maternal uncle of Gabriella; with whom he formed a

friendship that neither time nor absence, nor even death itself, had had power to dissolve; and to whom he confided the history and punishment of his clandestine juvenile engagement. Called home, the following year, by the Earl, his father, he had been prevailed upon to marry a lady of quality and large fortune. But, previous to these new nuptials, to secure justice to his eldest born, though he had not the courage to own her; as well as to tranquillize Mrs. Powel; he deposited in the hands of that worthy old lady, the certificate of his first marriage; to which he added a deed, that he called the codicil to whatever will he might have made, or might hereafter make; and in which he declared Juliet Granville, born near——, in Yorkshire, to be his lawful daughter, by his first marriage, with Juliet Powel, in Flanders; and, as such, he bequeathed to her the same portion, at his death, that should be settled upon any other daughter, or daughters, that he might

have, hereafter, by any subsequent marriage.

The impossibility of obtaining, in the Yorkshire retirement, such means of improvement, as were suitable to the future expectations and lot in life of his little girl, determined Lord Granville to have her conveyed to France for her education. Mrs. Powel, who had no other remaining tie upon earth, but a son who was settled in the East Indies, preferred accompanying her little darling to a separation; the fear of which, with the possession of the marriage-certificate, and the codicil to the will, had always counteracted her impatience for the discovery ultimately promised. The uncle of Gabriella, the Bishop, consented to take the child under his immediate care; and to place her in the convent in which his sister, the Marchioness of * * *, had placed his niece. And here the children had been brought up together, with the same opportunities of improvement; except that the little Ju-

liet had the advantage of speaking English with her grandmother; who knew no other language; and who entered the convent as a pensioner. By this means, and by books, Juliet had perfectly retained her native tongue, though she had acquired something of a foreign accent. She was known only as a young English lady of fortune, for whom no expence was to be spared; and the remittances for her board and education were constant, and even splendid. She had been called simply by the name of Mademoiselle Juliette, which had generally been supposed to be the name of her family. Here, from the facility with which she caught instruction, and the ability with which she appropriated its result, she became the most accomplished pupil of the convent; and was not more generally, from her appearance, called *la belle*, than from her acquirements and conduct *la sage petite Anglaise*. And here, still more united by the same sentiments than by

the same studies, Gabriella had formed with her the tender, confiding, and unalterable friendship, that had bound them to each other with an even sisterly love.

The Bishop frequently pressed the young lord to avow the birth of Juliet, and to legitimate her claims upon his family: but he always answered, that since she, whose reputation, happiness, and spirits might have paid the avowal, was gone, he could not support the fruitless pain of offending his sickly, but imperious father, by such a discovery, till the necessity of receiving his daughter should make it indispensable.

Previous to this period, Gabriella was taken from the convent, to prepare for her marriage with the Comte de——; and Juliet, who had then lost her tender grandmother, was invited to the wedding-ceremony, and to remain with her friend till she should be called to her own country. Lord Granville, with that spirit of procrastination which always

grows with indulgence, joyfully acceded to this invitation; and remitted to the ensuing summer the public acknowledgment of his daughter. But, ere the ensuing summer arrived, all these projects were rendered abortive! The Bishop, through a news-paper, received the fatal intelligence, that Lord Granville had been killed by a fall from his horse.

While the deeply disappointed and afflicted Juliet was the prey of heavy grief at this event, the Bishop, to whom the grandmother, in dying, had consigned the marriage-certificate, the codicil, and every letter or paper that authenticated the legitimacy of her grandchild, constituted himself guardian and protector of the young orphan.

Convinced that no time should be lost in making known her rights, yet unwilling to risk shocking the old peer by an abrupt address, he stated the affair to Lord Denmeath, brother to Lord Granville's second lady, and guardian of two children by the second marriage. To

this communication he received no answer. But, upon writing again, with more energy, and hinting at sending over an agent, Lord Denmeath thought proper to reply. His style was extremely cold. His brother-in-law, he said, had expired, after his fall, without uttering a word. Having, therefore, no knowledge of any secret business, he begged to be excused from entering into a discussion of the obscure affair to which the Bishop seemed to allude.

The Bishop grew but warmer in the interests of his Ward, from the difficulty of serving her. He sent over, to Lord Denmeath, copies of the codicil, of the certificate, and of every letter upon the subject, that had been written to the grandmother, or to himself, by the late lord.

The answer now was more civil, but evidently embarrassed, though professing much respect for the motives which guided the charitable Bishop; and a willingness to enter into some compromise for the

young person in question; provided she could be settled abroad, that so strange a tale might not disturb his sister; nor involve his nephew and niece, by coming before the public.

All compromise was declined by the Bishop, who now made known the whole history to the old peer.

The answer, nevertheless, was again from Lord Denmeath, though written by the desire, and in the name of the Earl; briefly saying, Let the young woman marry and settle in France; and, upon the delivery of the original documents relative to her birth, she shall be portioned; but she shall never be received nor owned in England; the Earl being determined not to countenance such a disgrace to his family, and to the memory of his son, as the acknowledgment of so unsuitable a marriage.

The Bishop held his honour engaged to his departed friend, to sustain the birth-right of the innocent orphan; he menaced, therefore, accompanying her

over to England himself, and putting all the documents, with the direction of the affair, into the hands of some celebrated lawyer.

Alarmed at this intimation, milder letters passed: but the result of all that the Bishop could obtain, was a promissory-note of six thousand pounds sterling, for the portion of a young person brought up at the convent of ***, and known by the name of Mademoiselle Juliette; to be paid by Messieurs ***, bankers, on the day of her marriage with a native of France, resident in that country.

The conditions annexed to the payment were then detailed, of delivering to the bankers the originals of all the MSS. of which copies had been sent over; with an acquittal, signed by the new married couple, and by the Bishop, to all future right or claim upon the Melbury family. The whole to be properly witnessed, &c. This promissory-note had the joint seal and signature of the old Earl and of Lord Denmeath.

But the Bishop inflexibly insisted, that his ward should be recognized as the Honourable Miss Granville; and share an equal portion with her half-sister, Aurora; for whom, upon the premature death of Lord Granville, the old peer had solicited and obtained the title and honours of an earl's daughter.

All representation proving fruitless, the Bishop was preparing to attend Miss Granville to England, when the French Revolution broke out. The general confusion first stopt his voyage, and next destroyed even the materials of his agency. The family-chateau was burnt by the populace; and all the papers of Juliet, which had been carefully hoarded up with the records of the house, were consumed! The promissory-note alone, and accidentally, had been saved; the Bishop chancing to have it in his pocket-book, for the purpose of consulting upon it with some lawyer.

With the nobleness of unsuspicious integrity, the Bishop wrote an account of

this disaster to Lord Denmeath; whose answer contained tidings of the death of the old Earl, and re-claimed the promissory-note for revisal. But the Bishop, who possessed no other proof or document of the identity of Juliet, would by no means part with a paper that became of the utmost importance.

Juliet, pitied and sustained, loved and esteemed by all, had been prevailed upon to continue with her cherished and cherishing friends, till some political calm should enable the Bishop to conduct her to England, and there to struggle for her rights. At the opening, however, of the dreadful reign of Robespierre, sudden and immediate danger had compelled Gabriella, with her husband and her child, to emigrate: but Juliet, hopeless of making herself acknowledged by her family without the support of the Bishop, had preferred, till she could obtain the sanction of his presence, to remain with the Marchioness.

"And what," Sir Jaspar cried, "what

is become of this Bishop? this man of peace, this worthiest wight that breathes the vital air?"

Gabriella herself knew not; nor what change of plan had induced her friend to venture over alone: she knew only that what was counselled by the Bishop must be wise; that what was executed by Juliet must be right.

Juliet, who had heard this recital with melting tenderness, was now with difficulty restrained, even by the presence of Sir Jaspar, from casting herself rather at the feet than into the arms, of her generous, noble, and confiding, though untrusted friend.

## CHAPTER LXX.

VARIOUS customers, though for small purchases, had, from time to time, interrupted, but not broken this narration. The Baronet respectfully made way for whoever came, but resumed his place the instant that it was vacated; spending the interval in selecting new pieces of ribbon; till, ere the history was finished, not a remnant of that article remained unsold. It was his purpose, he gallantly said, to present a top-knot, for a twelvemonth to come, to every fair syren who, either by face, voice, shape, feature, complexion, size, air, or manner, should afford him so much pleasure as to remind him, however transiently, of the adorable haberdasher, whose taper fingers had put it into his possession.

Gabriella interrupted these compli-

ments, to observe, with some anxiety, two strange men, who were sauntering up and down the street, and who, from time to time, peeped in at the window.

"And how can they do any better?" said the Baronet; "unless you invite them into your apartments? 'Tis precisely what I shall enact myself, if you turn me out of doors! Do you fancy you are to dart yourselves, you and your mischievous partner, into as many hearts as you can find spectators, and then bid your poor wounded gazers go lie down and bleed, in the kennel, like so many puppies; without allowing them even a lamenting yell, or friendly barking, to call themselves into notice before they give up the ghost? I pity the poor caitiffs with all my heart.

"A fellow-feeling makes one wond'rous kind!" *

"Let me, however, hope, that the seductive tale which I have been quaffing, has not intoxicated all my senses

* Garrick.

only to my own destruction! that my poor nerves have not been pierced and pinched; that my feelings have not been twitched and tweaked, and my senses scared and confounded, only to drag my own crazy folly into fuller view!"

He paused a few minutes, during which Gabriella began making out the account of her ribbons; and then, with a mild voice, but an arch brow, "Hear me," he resumed, "my dulcet frog! for such, you know, is your destined classification in this country; hear, and under your auspices let me proceed. If this fair marvellous Wanderer, — in her birth no longer an Incognita, yet an Incognita still in her history; will venture to put herself under my protection, — honourably I mean; so don't frown! for nothing so spoils the forehead! Besides, who can look at you, and not mean honourably? With all your sweetness, there is a fire in your eye, that, if I harboured a naughty idea, only for a moment, would, I see plainly, con-

sume me. Let us, however, talk the matter over with becoming seriousness. It may, perchance, be less difficult than you may imagine, to establish your fair journeywoman's rights."

"O make the attempt, then," cried Gabriella; "exert yourself in so noble a trial!"

"A little activity," he continued, "and a great deal of menacing, adroitly put in play, will now and then do wonders. A little money, too, dexterously handled, rarely does much harm. When Lord Denmeath sees all these at work, take my word for it, he will think twice, before he will let them operate upon the public. We like mighty well to reap the fruits of our address in the world; but we have a sagacious tendency to keeping our ways and means to ourselves. Lord Denmeath, after all, as a worldly man, does but his office, in putting to sleep his conscience for the better keeping awake his interest. This is simply in the ordinary course of

things: but, when the blood that is youthful is not generous; when life is begun with the crafty hardness that years, experience, and disappointment have given to those who are ending it; when we see even striplings, who ought to be made up of wild romance, and credulous enthusiasm, meanly, basely, heartlessly, for a few pitiful thousands, suffer an orphan to be cheated, despoiled of her rank in life, and made an alien to her country, as well as to her family;—then it is, that I curse Vanity as an imp of darkness, and Pride as a demon of hell! When a boy like Lord Melbury, a young girl such as Lady Aurora—"

"They are innocent, Sir Jaspar! they are noble! they are faultless!" called out Juliet, eagerly returning to the shop; "they dream not of my claims; they have not the most distant idea that I have the honour to belong to their house. Innocent? they are meritorious! Conceiving me simply a helpless, unpatronized, and indigent Wan-

derer, they have treated me with a kindness, a consideration, an heavenly benevolence, that, towards a stranger so forlorn, could have been dictated only by the most angelic of natures!"

"Astonishing! incredible!" exclaimed Sir Jaspar. "What! do they not know your story? Have you made no appeal to their justice, their affections?"

"You will cease, Sir, to wonder, and cease also, I hope, to question me, when I tell you that here, even here, I have not made my situation known! here, even here,—to the friend of my heart, the confident of my life, the loved and honoured descendant of the house by which I have been preserved, and from which alone I hope for protection! Judge then, how powerful must be my motives for secresy! And she,—she submits to my silence! Too high-minded for distrust, too nobly mistress of herself for impatience; and conscious that even a wish, expressed, would to me have the force of a command, she waits

my time! She knows the most dire and barbarous obstacles could alone lead me to reserve and concealment, where my softest consolation would be openness and sympathy!"

Gabriella could offer no answer but by wide extended arms, with which Juliet, gushing into tears, was fondly encircled; while the Baronet, touched, amazed, and enchanted, repeatedly wiped his eyes; when Gabriella, observing, again, at the window, one of the men of whom she had spoken, whispered Juliet to compose herself, or to retire.

There was not time: Riley, who had seen her, bounced into the shop.

"Ah, ha, I have caught you at last, have I, Demoiselle?" he cried, rubbing his hands with joy. "I could not devise where the deuce you had hidden yourself. I only knew you were in some shabby little bit of a shop in this street. And who do you think is my author for this intelligence?—Won't you

guess ? — Why Surly ! your old friend, Surly !"

Apprehensive of some attack similar to that which she had endured at Brighthelmstone; Juliet ventured not to speak, though she felt too anxious to withdraw: while Sir Jaspar, extremely curious, repeated, " Old Surly ?" in a tone that invited explanation.

" The same, faith ! He's come over o' purpose to hunt you out, Demoiselle."

" Me ?" cried Juliet, changing colour ; " and why ? — And who is he ?"

" Who is he? Well! that's droll, faith! Why you have not forgotten your old crony, the pilot ?"

Juliet looked down, to conceal the alarm with which she was seized.

" Why, I'll tell you how it all happened," continued Riley, mounting upon the counter, as he might have mounted upon his horse ; " I'll tell you how it all happened. About a month ago, in one of my rambles, I met Master Surly ;

and, for old acquaintance sake, I was prodigiously glad to see him: for I like, as a curiosity, to shew John Bull a Mounseer that i'n't a milk-sop. So we talked over our voyage; but when I told him that I had met with the Demoiselle at Brighthelmstone; and that she had cast off her slough, and was grown a beauty; he asked me a hundred questions, and said that, most likely, she was a person of whom he was in search; and after whom there had been a great hue and cry."

Juliet now opened various small drawers, shutting them almost at the same moment; but always with her face turned from Riley.

"Well, we parted, and I saw no more of him, and thought no more of him neither, faith! till this very morning, when I popt upon him, all at once, in Piccadilly. And then, he told me that he was just come from Brighthelmstone, where he had been looking for you."

Juliet though in a tremour that shook her whole frame, faintly said, "And why?"

"Because, by my account of you, he was satisfied you must be the very person that he was commissioned to find."

Juliet now seemed scarcely able to sustain herself. Gabriella and Sir Jaspar saw, with deep concern, her emotion; but Riley, unobservant, went on.

"At Brighton, he had discovered that you had journied up to town, in the stage. And he came up after you, in the very same carriage, only yesterday. And, by means of a boy at the inn, who had called your hackney-coach, he had just found out coachy; who informed him, that he had set down a pretty young damsel, that had arrived from Brighton about a week ago, at a small shop in Frith-street, Soho. Upon that, I offered to help him in his search; and we jogged on to these quarters together: for I always liked you, Demoiselle, and always had a prodigious mind to know who you

were. But the deuce a bit would you ever tell me. So we have been sauntering and maundering up and down the street, one on one side, and t'other on t'other, in search of you; peeping and peering into every shop, and lounging and squinting at every window. We have had the devil of a job of it to find you, Demoiselle; we have, faith!—But my best sport will be to make Monsieur Surly look you full in the face, as I did myself, without knowing you! though he pretends that that's all one. The French always say that to every think that they don't like; *c'est egal!* cries Monsieur, whenever he's put out of his way. However, old Surly stands to it, that he shall discover you in a twinkling; for he's got your description."

"My description?" Juliet repeated; in a tone of terrour.

"Ay; and there he is, faith! on t'other side the way! An old owl!" cried Riley; striding to the door, and calling aloud, "Surly! old Surly! Come over, Mounseer Surly!"

Juliet was now precipitately gliding into the little room; but Sir Jaspar, intercepting her flight, warmly entreated, whatever might be her fears or her difficulties, to be accepted as her protector: and, while she was struggling, with speechless impatience, to pass him, the pilot, pulled into the shop by Riley, stood full before her; stared hardily in her face; looked at a paper which he held in his hand, and, grinning horribly a scoffing smile, walked away, without speaking.

Juliet, who seemed nearly fainting, was drawn tenderly into the adjoining room by Gabriella; who was herself in almost equal consternation.

"A pretty feat you have performed here, Sir! An admirable exploit!" said Sir Jaspar, angrily, to Riley; who, laughing heartily at the savage satisfaction of the pilot, had re-mounted the counter. "And what sort of man must you be to find it so dulcet and recreative, to give chace to a timid, defenceless lamb?"

"What sort of man?" returned Riley; "faith, I don't know! I don't, faith! But who does? If you can tell me the man who knows himself, you'll do more than has been done yet since the days of old Adam. I never trouble myself with vain researches, and combinations, and developments, and metaphysical analysings. What do they do for us, beside cracking our skulls? They only leave us where they found us; forced to eat and drink, and sleep and wake, and live and die, just the same, since all the discoveries of Newton, as we did before we knew a square from an angle."

"O ho, you are a philosopher, Sir, then, are you?" said Sir Jaspar; "a Cynic? guided by contempt of mankind?"

"Not a whit! I only follow my humour. If that happens to please my friends, so much the better; if not, I am but little 'of the melting mood;' I go on all the same. I never stop to weigh opinion in the scale of my proceedings."

"And do you never weigh humanity, neither, Sir? the feelings of others? the good or ill of society?"

"No! I never think of all that. I let the world take its own course, as I take mine. I have long had a craving desire to know who this girl is; and she would never tell me. Her obstinacy doubles my curiosity; and when my curiosity gets at the helm, it does just what it will with me. It does, faith!"

Gabriella, now returning, demanded of Riley what business detained him in the shop, with an air of dignity that surprised him into making something like an apology; to which he added, that he only stayed to have a little further parley with the demoiselle.

That young lady was indisposed, and could be spoken to no more.

"Indisposed?" he repeated; "I am sorry for that! I am, faith! Poor demoiselle! she has been liberal enough of diversion to me, one way or another. However, I shall soon discover who she

is; for I know where to catch Master Surly; and he says he is promised a thumping reward, if he finds that she is the right person. He is but an agent, poor Surly: but he expects his principal, with the cash, over every hour; if he i'n't landed already.

Gabriella, who had returned to the little parlour, perceived, now, that the face of Juliet looked convulsed with horrour. She procured her a glass of hartshorn and water; and entreated the Baronet, who seemed transfixed with concern, to force Riley away; and to be gone, also, himself.

Sir Jaspar could not refuse compliance; but neither could he deny himself advancing, for an instant, to say, in a low voice, to Juliet, "Bow not down your lovely head, sweet lilly! I have friends who will find means to succour and protect you, be who will your assaulter!"

Offering Riley, then, a place in his chariot, and dropping, as he passed, his

purse into the till-box, he drove off, with his new acquaintance.

For some minutes, excess of terrour robbed Juliet of speech, and of all power of exertion; but when, by the cares and soothings of Gabriella, she was, in some degree, restored, "Oh my beloved friend!" she cried, "we must part again, — immediately part!"

A tear stole down the cheek of Gabriella as she heard this annunciation; but she offered no remonstrance; she permitted herself no enquiry; her eye alone said, "Why, why this!"

Juliet saw, but shrunk from this mute eloquence, hastily arranging herself for going out; making up a packet of linen to carry in her hand, and hanging a loaded work-bag upon her arm.

Casting herself, then, into the arms of her friend, "Oh my Gabriella," she cried, "I must fly, — instantly fly! — or entail a misery upon the rest of my existence too horrible for description! Whither, — which way to go, I know

not, — but I must be hidden from all mankind! — To-morrow I will write to you; — constantly I will write to you, — dear, generous, noblest of friends, farewell, farewell!"

They embraced, mingled their tears, embraced again, and separated.

# BOOK VIII.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

HER head bowed low; her bonnet drawn over her eyes; ignorant what course she took, and earnest only to discover any inlet into the country by which she might immediately quit the town; Juliet, with hurried footsteps, and trembling apprehensions, became again a Wanderer.

She passed through various streets, but, unacquainted with London, read, without any aid to her purpose, their names, till, printed in large characters, her eyes were struck with the word Piccadilly; and, presently, she was accosted by an ordinary man, who had a long whip in his hand, and who, holding open the door of a carriage, asked whether she would have a cast; saying that he was ready to set off immediately.

Finding that the vehicle was a stage-coach, she eagerly accepted the proposal, and seated herself next to an elderly woman.

The man demanded whether she meant to go all the way.

She answered in the affirmative; and, to her inexpressible satisfaction, was driven out of London.

Not to risk discovering to her fellow-travellers so extraordinary a circumstance, as that of beginning an excursion in utter ignorance where it might end, she forbore asking any questions; and left to the time of her alighting at the spot to which the stage was destined, her own acquaintance with her local situation.

It was not, therefore, till she descended from the coach, that she found that she had taken the road to Bagshot.

The immediate plan which, in her way, she had formed, was to enter the first shop that she saw open; thence to write to Gabriella; and then to stroll on to the nearest village, and lodge her-

self in the first clean cottage which could afford her a room.

The sight, however, of the Salisbury stage, gave her a desire to travel instantly further from London; and she asked whether there were a vacant place. She was immediately accommodated; and her journey thither, though long, and passed in dreadful apprehension, was without accident or event.

Arrived at Salisbury, she quitted the machine, and her fellow travellers, with whom she had scarcely exchanged a word; and, hoping that she was now out of the way of pursuit, she put her plan into execution, by writing a tranquillizing line to Gabriella, from a stationer's shop; and then, set forth in search of a dwelling.

This was by no means easy to find. A solitary stranger, bearing her own small baggage, after travelling all night, was not very likely to be seen but with eyes of scrutiny and suspicion. Yet her air, her manner, and her language made

her application always best received by the upper class of trades-people, who were most able to discern, that such belonged not to any vulgar or ordinary person: but, when they found that she enquired for a lodging, without giving any name, or any reference, they held back, alike, from granting her admission, or forwarding her wish by any recommendation.

The evident caution with which she hid as much as possible of her face, made the beauty of what was still necessarily visible, create as much ill opinion as admiration; though the perfect modesty of her deportment rescued her from receiving any offence.

In the smaller shops, and by the meaner and poorer sort of people, her carrying her parcel herself, levelled her, instantly, to their own rank; while her demand of assistance, her loneliness and even her loveliness, sunk her far beneath it, in their opinion; and, almost with one accord, they bluntly told her that she might find a lodging at an inn.

Helpless, distressed, she wandered some time in this fruitless research; too much self-occupied to remark the buildings, the neatness, the antiquities, or the singularities of the city which she was patrolling; till her eyes were caught by the little rivulets which, in most of the streets, separate the foot-path from the high-road, by perceiving two ruddy-cheeked, smiling little cherubs, attempting to paddle over one of them, and playing so incautiously, that they seemed every moment in danger of falling into the water.

She hastened towards them, to point out a bridge, somewhat higher up, by which they might more safely pass; but the elder child, a rosy boy, careless and sportive, heeded her not; till, finding the stream deeper than he expected, his little feet slipt, and he would inevitably have been under water, had not Juliet, with dextrous speed, caught him by the coat.

She aided him to scramble out, though

with much difficulty, for he was wet through, and covered with mud. Frightened out of his little senses, he set up an unappeaseable cry; in which the other child, a pretty little girl, impelled by babyish though unconscious sympathy, joined, with all the vociferation which her feeble lungs were capable of emitting.

Juliet, with that kindness which childish helplessness ought always to inspire, soothed them with gentle words, and persuaded the boy to hasten to his home, that he might take off his wet cloaths before he caught cold. But they both sat down to cry at their leisure; though rather as if they did not understand, than as if they resisted her counsel.

Pitying their simple sufferings, she offered the boy a penny, to buy a gingerbread cake, if he would rise.

Quick, or rather immediate, now, was the transition from despondence to transport. The boy not merely wiped

his eyes, and ceased his sobs, but, all smiles and delight, began a rapid prattling of where he should buy, and of what sort should be, his cake; while every word, rapturously, though indistinctly, was echoed by the little girl, not less slack in reviving.

The elasticity, however, of their little persons, kept not entirely pace with that of their spirits. The wet attire of the boy, which his seat on the dust had rendered as heavy as it was uncomfortable, nearly disabled him from rising; and his little sister, who had lost one of her shoes in the rivulet, had run a thorn into her foot, and could not stand without crying.

The children were not able to give any account of who they were that was intelligible; nor of whence they came, save that it was from a great, great way off. Unwilling to leave them in so pitiable a plight, Juliet, observing that the street, which led out of the town, was empty, looked for a clean spot, and,

bending upon one knee, had just drawn out the splinter from the foot of the little girl, when the sound of the voice of a female, who was approaching, calling out, "Here I be, my loveys! here comes mammy!" so miraculously electrified the little creatures, that, forgetting all impediment to motion, they bounded up, delighted; the boy no longer sensible to the weight of his wet garments, nor the girl to the tenderness of her hurt foot: and both capered to embrace the knees of their mammy; whose eyes alone could return their caresses; her hands being engaged in holding a heavy basket upon her head.

But when she perceived their condition, she anxiously demanded what had happened.

They both again began grievously to cry, while the boy related that he had been drowned, but that the *dood ady* (good lady) had come and saved his life: and the little girl, interrupting him every moment, kept presenting her foot, in

telling a similar story of the kindness of the *dood ady.*

To Juliet scarcely a word of their narrations was intelligible; but, to the ears of their mother, accustomed to their dialect, their lipsing and their imperfect speech, these prattling details were as potent in eloquence, as the most polished orations of Cicero or Demosthenes, are to those of the classical scholar.

The gratitude of the good woman for the services rendered to her little ones, was so warm and cordial, that she cried for joy, in pouring forth blessings upon the head of Juliet, for having lent so friendly a hand, she said, to her poor boy; and having done what she called so neighbourly a kindness by her dear little girl.

She had directed her children, she said, to go straight to Dame Goss's, beyond the turnpike; having had business to transact at a house which they could not enter; but the little dearys were not yet come to their memory; and, but for

so good a friend, the poor loveys might have lain in the wet and the mud, till they had been half choaked.

Seeing the children thus safely restored to their best friend, Juliet meant to continue her solitary search; but the good woman, judging from her kind offices, that there was nothing to fear from her disdain; and concluding from her parcel, that there was nothing to respect in her rank, frankly demanded her assistance, for helping on the children as far as to the turnpike; simply adding, that she would do as good a turn for her, in requital, another time; but that her basket was heavily laden, and the poor little things, one without its shoe, and the other in wet cloaths, would be but troublesome, in such a broiling sun, to pull all the way by her petticoat.

Cruelly experiencing want of succour herself, Juliet, always open to charity, was now more than usually ready to serve or oblige. With the utmost alacrity, therefore, complying with the

request, she deposited her packet in the poor woman's basket; bound her pocket-handkerchief round the foot and ancle of the little girl; and then, taking a hand of each of the children, and gently alluring them on, by lively and playful talk, she conducted them to the turnpike; without any other difficulty than some fatigue to herself; which was amply compensated by the pleasure of helping the little innocents, and their affectionate mother; joined to the relief to her own feelings, afforded by a social exercise, that drew her, for a while, from her fearful reflections.

The woman, charmed by such kindness, begged to have the direction of Juliet, that she might call to thank her, when next she came to Salisbury; whither some business commonly brought her every four or five months.

Juliet was obliged to confess herself a mere passenger; but asked, in return, the name and address of her new acquaintance.

Margery Fairfield, she answered, was her name, and she lived a far off in the New Forest. She was going, in a friend's cart, to Romsey, and there her husband would meet her, and carry her little girl. She could never come out without her children, if she were ever so heavily laden, for her husband was at work all day, and there was nobody to take care of them in her absence.

A ray of pleasure now broke through the gloomy forebodings of Juliet; there seemed to her an opening to an asylum, during the period of her concealment, fortunate beyond her hopes; to lodge with a rustic family of this simple description, in so retired and remote a spot, promising all the security and privacy that she required, with fine air, pleasant country, and worthy hosts.

A very few enquiries sufficed to satisfy her, that she might find a small room, in which she could sleep; and a little further discourse procured her all the details necessary for learning the route

to the dame's cottage. She forbore, nevertheless, hinting at her design, that neither trouble, expence, nor preparation might precede her arrival.

She regretted her inability to accompany these new friends, at once, to their home; but her letter to Gabriella had desired that the answer might be directed to be left at the post office at Salisbury, till called for; and she was too uncertain what her position might be in the New Forest, to hazard any change of address. She was deeply anxious to hear from Gabriella; and to learn whether she had herself been sought since her flight.

When they reached the small, mean house of Dame Goss, beyond the turnpike, the expected cart was not yet arrived; and Juliet, being kindly invited to take a little rest, ventured to solicit, from her new friend, a recommendation to a cheap lodging, with some honest hostess.

Enchanted to be able to serve her, the

poor woman immediately said, that she could no where be better than in that very house: and when its mistress made various objections; first, that she had not a room unoccupied; next, that she had no spare bed; and then, that her husband would be angry; the zealous Dame Fairfield obviated them all. The room, she said, with a significant nod, where they kept their boxes, would be never the worse for being slept in a few nights, now all the boxes were empty; and the bed she had had for herself the last winter, could be easily carried up stairs, for she would stop to carry it with her own hands: and as to Master Goss, he was so fond of her little dearys, that he could not have so bad a heart as to be off doing a service to a gentlewoman who had been so kind to them.

This eloquence was all-sufficient; the real obstacle, that of aiding an unknown traveller, occurring neither to the advocate nor to the opponent. Free from the niceties of custom in higher life,

and unembarrassed by the perplexities of discriminating scruples, the good women, often lonely travellers themselves, saw nothing in such a situation to excite distrust; and regarded it therefore simply as a claim upon hospitality. To have manifested good nature, was sufficient to procure credit for good character; and to have done kind offices, was to secure their return.

Dame Fairfield busily set about putting into order a little apartment, that was encumbered with trunks and boxes, which she piled one upon another, to make a place for a small bed. She would suffer no one to give her any help; sweeping, dusting, rubbing, and arranging all the lumber herself; with an alacrity of pleasure, a gaiety of good will, that charmed away, for a while, the misery of Juliet, by the consoling picture thus presented to her view, of untaught benevolence and generosity: a picture which must always be pleasing to the friend of human nature, however

less exalting, than when those qualities, as the cultured fruits of religion and of principle, are purified into virtues.

In this mean little lodging, to avoid being seen or heard of, Juliet passed three days, self-inclosed; with no employment but that of writing long letters to Gabriella, which, eventually, were to be sent by the post, or delivered by herself. This, however, not filling up her time, the wish of obliging, joined to a constant desire of acquiring, in every situation, the art of being useful,—that art which, more than wealth, or state, or power, preserves its cultivator from wearying either himself or those around him;—led her to bestow the rest of the day in aiding the woman of the house, in sundry occupations.

To have seen and examined the famous cathedral; to have found out the walks; to have informed herself of the manufactures; and to have visited the antiquities and curiosities of this celebrated city, and its neighbourhood, might have

solaced the anxiety of this moment; but discretion baffled curiosity, and fear took place of all desire of amusement. She could only regale her confinement by the hope of soon obtaining her freedom in an innocent and beautiful retreat; and remained, therefore, perfectly stationary, till she conceived that an answer might be returned from Gabriella.

On the evening of that day, she prevailed upon Dame Goss, whose mornings were all engaged, but whose good will she had now completely secured, to be her messenger to the post-office.

Without any letter, however, the messenger returned, though with an acknowledgement that one was arrived; but that it could only be delivered to Miss Ellis herself; or to a written order with a receipt.

Juliet was immediately preparing to write one, when Dame Goss said, "They do tell me that you be a person

advertised in the London news-papers? It ben't true; be it?"

"Good Heaven, no!" Juliet ejaculated.

"Pray, be you the person called, 'Commonly known by the name of Miss Ellis?'"

Juliet, changing colour, asked why she made that enquiry.

The woman, instead of answering, looked earnestly in her face, with an air of stedfast examination.

In the greatest dismay, Juliet turned from her, without hazarding another question, and was going up stairs; but Dame Goss begged that she would just stop a bit, because two persons were a coming, that she had promised should have a peep at her.

Shocked and terrified, Juliet would still have passed on; but an instant sufficed to tell her, that, in such an emergency, not to make some immediate attempt to escape, was to be lost.

Turning, therefore, back, "Dame

Goss," she cried, slipping a crown-piece into her hands, with an apology for giving her so much trouble, "hasten again to the post-office, and say that I shall come for my letter myself."

The woman, without question or demur, received the money and set off. And she was no sooner out of sight, than Juliet, taking her own small packet, unnoticed by Master Goss, who was at work in his little garden, went forth by the opposite way; turning, as quickly as possible, from the high road, where she might most naturally be pursued; and, for all else, committing her footsteps to chance and to hope, — those last, and not seldom, best friends of distress and difficulty.

Wandering on, by paths unknown to herself, with feet not more swift than trembling; fearing she was followed, yet not daring, by a glance around, to ascertain either danger or safety, she overtook a young village-girl, who was hoydening with a smart footman; but

who caught her attention, by representing to him, that, if he detained her any longer, she should miss the return-chaise, and not know how to get back to Romsey; for her mother would be too angry to wait for her even a moment.

The sound of Romsey revived the spirits of Juliet. If she could join this young person, she might find a conveyance, equally unsuspected and expeditious, to within a mile or two of the very spot where she hoped for concealment. She loitered, therefore, in sight, till the footman retreated, and then, following the girl, though with affright, by returning to the town, she soon found herself in the church-yard of the cathedral; where the damsel encountered her waiting mother, with whom, boldly defying her wrath, she began, sturdily, to wrangle.

Juliet stood aloof, during the altercation, still hoping to accompany them in their route. The beautiful Gothic structure before her, the latest and finest

remains of ancient elegance, lightness, and taste, was nearly lost to her sight, from the misery and pre-occupation of her mind; though appearing now with peculiar effect, from the shadows cast upon it by the rising moon. Yet soon, in defiance of all absorption, the magnetic affinity, in a mind natively pious, of religious solemnity with sorrow, made the antique grace of this wonderful edifice, catch, even in this instant of terrour and agitation, the admiring eye of Juliet; whose mind was always open to excellence, even when most incapable of receiving any species of pleasure.

She leaned, for a moment's repose, in a recess of the building, which the shade rendered dark, nearly sinking under the horrour of pursuit, and the shame of eluding it. To find herself advertised in a news-paper! — the blood mounted indignantly into her cheeks. — Perhaps to be described! — perhaps, named! and with a reward for her discovery! — cold from them, at this sur-

mise, the blood again descended to her heart: yet every feeling was transient, that led not to immediate escape; every reflection was momentary, that turned, not to personal safety.

The dispute between the mother and daughter was interrupted,—not finished,—by the re-appearance of the footman, who told them that the postilion was just going off.

They scampered instantly to an inn, from the gateway of which a post-chaise was issuing.

Juliet, who had pursued, now joined them, and proposed making one in their party.

The women neither refused nor consented; they renewed their contention, and heard only one another: but the postilion, to whom Juliet held out half-a-crown, gave her a place with readiness,—and she was driven to Romsey.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

THE affrighted Juliet, every instant in expectation of being stopt, was silent the whole way; but the loquacity of her companions, to whom the journey was an uninterrupted opportunity for wrangling, secured her from any remark; and they arrived, and were separating, at Romsey, nearly without having taken notice that they had ever been together, when Juliet, having descended from the chaise, turned fearfully round, to examine whether she were pursued.

She saw no one; and blest Heaven.

Nevertheless, it was night; she was alone, in the suburbs of a strange town; and wholly ignorant of the way to the New Forest. It was too late to go on without a guide; yet, to demand one, or to order a chaise, at such an hour, would be risking to leave documents

behind her, that might facilitate her being discovered. She addressed herself, therefore, to her fellow-travellers, and besought them to afford, or to procure her, a safe lodging for the night.

The mother, coarsely, demanded immediate payment; which being accorded, she said that she had some spare bedding, which could be put upon the floor, in the sleeping-room of Debby.

Juliet, accompanied them to their homely habitation, at the further extremity of a narrow lane, in the busy and prosperous town of Romsey; and though nothing could be more ordinary than the dwelling, or the accommodations which she there found, neither splendour, nor wealth, nor luxury, nor pleasure, could have devised for her, at that moment, a sojourn more acceptable; since, to all but safety, distress and affright made her insensible.

But, this first moment of solid satisfaction passed, her whole mind became absorbed in fearful ruminations upon

the various risks that she was running, and in gloomy apprehensions of what might be their result.

Her taciturnity and dejection were as little imitated as they were little happy: her companion, almost equally self-occupied, though by no means equally incommoded by foresight, or burthened with discretion, broke forth immediately into the history of her own affairs and situation; bitterly inveighing against the ill nature of her mother, which was always thwarting every thing that was agreeable; and boldly declaring her fixed determination, to go to the fair with Mr. Thomas.

The humanity of Juliet here conquered her silence; but her representations, whether of danger or of duty, were scouted with rude merriment; and she found again as wilful a victim to pleasure as Flora Pierson; though without the simplicity, the good humour, or the beauty of that credulous maiden.

Nearly with the light, Juliet arose, resolved, with whatever fatigue, to travel

on foot, that she might not hazard being recognized, through the advertisement, by any coachman or postilion; and, to be less liable to detection from passing observers, she changed, over night, her bonnet, which was of white chip, for one the most coarse and ordinary of straw, with her young hostess; of whom, also, she bought a blue striped apron.

Shocking to all her feelings was this attempt at disguise, so imitative of guilt, so full of semblance to conscious imposture. But there are sometimes circumstances, great and critical, that call for all the energy of our courage, and demand all the resources of our faculties, for warding off impending and substantial evil, at whatever risk of transitory misconstruction.

Her account being already settled, she wished to depart unobserved, that she might less easily be traced. Her young hostess, sleeping late and tired, slept soundly, and was not disturbed by her

rising, dressing, or opening the room-door; and she glided down stairs without being missed, or noticed. The door of the house was fastened only by a bolt, and she gained the street without noise or interruption.

Here all yet was still as night; the houses were shut up, and nothing was in view, nor in hearing, but a solitary cart, driven by a young carter, who amused his toil by the alternate pleasure of smacking his horse, and whistling to the winds.

This vehicle, which was probably travelling to the high road, she determined to follow.

The general stillness made the slightest motion heard, and the carter, though at a considerable distance, turned round, and called out, "Why you be up betimes, my lovey! come and Ize give you a cast."

Startled, she looked down, crossing the way, and appearing not to suppose herself to be the person thus addressed:

but the carter, standing still, repeated his invitation; assuring her that he had plenty of room.

Uncertain how to act, she stopt.

Terms of coarse endearment, then, accompanied a more pressing desire that she would advance.

Frightened, she drew back; but the carter, throwing his whip upon his carriage, vowed that she should be caught, and ran after her, shouting aloud, till she regained the house. He then scoffingly exclaimed, "Why a be plaguy shy o'the sudden, Mistress Debby!" and, composedly turning upon his heel, began again to smack his horse, and whistle to the winds.

Juliet, who in finding herself taken for her young hostess, found, also, how light a character that young hostess bore, was struck to see danger thus every way surrounding her; and alarmed at the risk, to which impatience had blinded her, of travelling, at so early an hour, alone. Alas! she

cried, is it only under the domestic roof,—that roof to me denied!—that woman can know safety, respect, and honour?

She now strolled to the vicinity of a capital mansion, at the door of which, if again put in fear, she could knock and make herself heard.

But the higgler went on; and another cart soon appeared, in which she had the pleasure to see a woman, driven by a boy. Unannoyed, then, she walked by its side till she came to the long middle street; when she found that, from solitude, at least, she had nothing more to apprehend. Carts, waggons, and diligences, were wheeling through the town; market-women were arriving with butter, eggs, and poultry; workmen and manufacturers were trudging to their daily occupations; all was alive and in motion; and commerce, with its hundred hands, was every where opening and spreading its sources of wealth, through its active sisters, ingenuity and industry.

No difficulty now remained for finding the route; travellers of every kind led the way. Her coarse bonnet, and blue apron saved her from peculiar remark; and her appearance of decency, with the deep care in her countenance, which, to the common observer, seemed but an air of business, kept aloof all intrusive impertinence.

Thus, for the first early hours of the morning, she journeyed on, nearly unnoticed, and wholly unmolested. Every one, like herself, alert to proceed, and impressed with the value of time, because using it to advantage, pursued his own purpose, without leisure or thought to trouble himself with that of his neighbour.

Five times she had already counted the friendly mile-stone, since she had quitted Romsey: one mile only remained to be trodden, ere she reached the New Forest; but that mile was replete with obstacles, to which its five sisters had been strangers.

It was now noon; and a gentle breeze, which hitherto had fanned her passage, and wafted to her refreshment, suddenly ceased its playful benignity; chaced to a distance by the burning rays of a vertical sun, just bursting forth with meridianal fire and splendour; and dispersing the flying clouds which, in obstructing its refulgence, had softened its intenseness.

This quick change of temperature, operating, materially, like an effective change of climate, annihilated, for the moment, all the strength of Juliet; who, as yet, from the freshness of the morning air, and the vivacity of mental courage, had been a stranger to fatigue.

Upon looking around, to seek a spot where she might obtain a few instants' rest, and some passing succour; she observed that the road, but just before so busily peopled, appeared to be abruptly forsaken. The labourers were no longer working at the high ways, or at the hedges; the harvest-men were va-

nished; the market-women were gone; the road retained merely here and there an idle straggler; and the fields exhibited only a solitary boy, left to frighten away the birds.

A sensation nearly of famine with which next, from long fasting, joined to vigorous exercise in the open air, she felt assailed, soon pointed out to her that the cause of this general desertion was the rural hour of repast.

Initiated, now, by her own exertions, in the necessity both of support, and of rest, she, too, felt that this was the hour of nature for recruit. But where stop? and how procure sustenance with safety and prudence?

She looked about for some cottage, and was not long ere she found one; but, upon begging for a glass of water from a husbandman, who was standing upon the threshold, he answered that she should have it, if she would pay him with a kiss.

She walked on to another; but some

men were smoaking at the door, and she had not courage to make her demand.

At a third, she was disconcerted, by a familiar invitation to partake of a cup of cyder.

She now resolved to make no further application but to females; since countrymen, even those who are freest from any evil designs, are almost all either gross or facetious.

Women, however, at this hour, were not easily met with; they were within, preparing their meals, or cleaning their platters, and feeding their poultry, rabbits, or pigs.

She now drooped, scarcely able to breathe from the oppression of the heat; or to sustain herself from the enfeebling effects of emptiness, joined to over-powering fatigue. With pain and difficulty she dragged on her wearied limbs; while a furious thirst parched her mouth, and seemed consuming her inside.

Now, too, her distress received the tormenting augmentation of intrusive interruption; for, in losing the elasticity of her motions, she lost, to the vulgar observer, her appearance of innocence. Her eye, eagerly cast around in search of an asylum, appeared to be courting attention; her languor seemed but loitering; and her slow unequal pace, wore the air of inviting a companion.

Nor was the character of chaste diligence, and vivacious business, any longer predominant in those whom she now casually encountered. The nood-tide heat, in impairing their bodily strength, caused a mental lassitude, that made them ready for any dissipation that might divert their weariness; and Juliet, young, rosy, and alone, seemed exactly fashioned for awakening their drowsy faculties. No one, therefore, passed, without remarking her; and scarcely any one without making her some address. The inconsistency of her attire, which her slackened pace allowed time for

developing, gave rise to much comment, and some mockery. Her ordinary bonnet and blue apron, ill accorded with the other part of her dress; and she was now assailed with coarse compliments upon her pretty face; now by jocose propositions to join company; and now by free solicitations for a salute.

Painfully she forced herself on, till, at length, she discerned an ancient dame, in a field by the side of the road, who sat spinning at the door of a cottage.

She crossed a style, and, presenting herself to the old woman, craved a draught of water, and permission to take a little rest.

The good old dame, who was surrounded by little boys and girls, to whom she was singing the antique ballad of the children of the wood, in a tone so dolorous, and with such heavy sighs, that the elder of her hearers, who were five and six years old, were dissolved in tears; while the younger ones clung to her knees, pale and scared, finished

her stanza, before she would answer, or look at the suppliant stranger. She then raised her eyes, with evident vexation at the interruption: but, when she perceived the weak state, and listened to the faint accents of her petitioner, the expression of her countenance became all benevolence; and, good humouredly nodding her head, she disengaged herself from the children, arose, fetched a horn of water, added to it a cup of milk, and then, presenting to the weary traveller her own chair, which was large and low, she got a smaller, and less commodious one, from the kitchen for herself.

The nearly exhausted Juliet gratefully accepted this hospitality; and, in quaffing her milk and water, believed herself initiated in the knowledge of the flavour, and of all the occult qualities, of Nectar.

It is thus, then, she thought, that the poor and laborious, also, learn, even from their toils and sufferings, what is luxury and enjoyment! for where is the regale, and what is the libation,

which the most sumptuous table of refined elegance can offer, that can be more exquisite to the taste, than this simple beverage of milk and water, received thus at the moment of parching thirst, and deadly fatigue?

Meanwhile, the little ones, impatient at the interruption of a tale which engaged all their tenderest feelings; and of which no repetition could diminish the interest; looked with clouded brows, and unchecked ill humour, upon the intruder; and, while the elder ones vented their chagrin by crying, some of the younger ones, yet more completely in the rough hands of untutored nature, rushed forward to beat the cause of their vexation; while others, indignantly, struggled to pull her out of the chair of their grandame.

Juliet, whom their fat little hands could not hurt, and who approved their fondness both for their grandmother and for the ballad, forgave their petulance in favour of its motive: but the grandame, putting aside her spinning

wheel, called them all around her, and calmly enquired what was the matter?

They vociferously answered that they wanted to push away the naughty person who was come to take granny's chair.

And what, she asked, would they do themselves, should they be obliged to walk a great way off, till they were tired to death, and as dry as dust, if nobody would give them a little drink, nor a seat to sit down?

But they would never walk a great way off, they answered; never as long as they lived! They would always stay at home with dad and mam and grandam.

But dad and mam, she resumed, were often obliged to walk a great way off themselves; and if nobody would let them have a seat, nor any thing to drink, what would become of them? whereas, if they should hap to light on this young gentlewoman in any trouble, she would remember what had been done for herself, and get them fresh water, and sweet milk, and the easiest chair she

could find: and would not they be glad of such good luck to dad and mam? Besides that, by doing good, they would be loved by all good boys and girls; and even by God himself, who was the Father of them all.

This was speaking at once to their sensations and their understandings; dad and mam in distress and relieved seemed present to their view; and they all flew to do something for their guest, as if their gratitude were already indebted. One brought her half an apple, another, a quarter of a pear; one, a bunch of red currants; another, of white; the youngest of the little girls presented her with an old broken rattle; and the smallest of the little boys, waddled to her with a hoop.

Amused by this infantine scene of filial piety, and revived by rest and refreshment, Juliet soon recompensed their endearing innocence, by dancing the smaller ones in her arms, and prattling playfully with those who were less babyish.

Then, putting a shilling into one of their hands, she requested to have a couple of eggs and a crust of bread.

The eggs were immediately baked in the cinders; the crust was cut from a loaf of sweet and fresh brown bread. And if her drink had seemed nectar, what was more substantial appeared to her to be ambrosia! and her little waiters became Hebes and Ganymedes.

Refreshment thus salubrious, rest thus restorative, and security thus serene, after fatigue, fasting, and alarm, made her deem this one of the most felicitous moments of her life. Her sole immediate desire was to lengthen it, and to spend, in this tranquil retreat, a part, at least, of the period destined to concealment and obscurity. She had not forgotten her first little *protegés*, nor lost her wish to join them and their worthy mother; but she had severely experienced how little fitted to the female character, to female safety, and female propriety, was this hazardous

plan of lonely wandering. She begged, therefore, permission, as a weary traveller, to pass the night in the cottage.

The good dame readily consented; saying, that she could not offer very handsome bedding; but that it should be clean and wholesome, for it had belonged to her youngest daughter, who was just gone out to service.

This arranged, the ballad was again begun, so exquisitely to the delight of the young audience, that though, at the stanza

Their little lips with blackberries
  Were all besmear'd and dyed;
And when they saw the darksome night
  They sat them down and cried,

they all sobbed aloud; they were yet so grieved when it was over, that they clung round their grandame, saying, with one voice, "Aden, granny, aden!"

Granny, however, was too much tired to comply, and the repetition was deferred to another day.

In the evening, the mother of the children came home, and heard what had been settled with her new and unknown guest, without objection or interference. The father appeared soon after, and was equally passive. The grandame was mistress of the cottage, and in her own room, which was that, also, of the elder children, Juliet was lodged. The younger branches of the family slept, with their father and mother, in the kitchen; which, like the apartment of the cobler, served them equally for parlour and hall.

Juliet found the man and his wife perfectly good sort of people, simply, but usefully employed in earning their living; while their aged mother took charge of their dwelling, their nourishment, and their children.

Thus safely and tranquilly situated, Juliet, without meeting any difficulty, proposed to sojourn with them for some days. She gave, also, a commission, to the younger mistress of the house, to

purchase her some ready-made linen at Romsey; and she was soon more consistently equipped, in new, but homely apparel.

This interval was most seasonably passed, in recruiting her strength, and calming her spirits. She took pleasant walks, accompanied by the tallest boy and girl; she worked for the grandmother; taught a part of the catechism to some of the children; played with them all, and made herself at once so useful and so agreeable in the rustic dwelling, that she won the heart and good will of all its inhabitants.

Yet, three times only the sun had set thus serenely, when her host, returning half an hour later in the evening than usual, appeared so altered and ill humoured, that Juliet thought it advisable to leave him with his family: but the slightness of the small building made as inevitable as it was alarming, her learning that she was herself the subject of his discontent.

He told his mother that she must be more cautious how she harboured travellers, or she might come to trouble; for there was a young female-swindler, in or about Salisbury, who was advertised in the news-papers; and who, upon being found out in her tricks, had made off from Dame Goss's, without so much as paying for her lodging. She had been traced as far as Romsey, by means of a postilion; but there, too, she had left her lodging by stealth, in the very middle of the night. All the coachmen and postilions and inn-keepers were looking out for her; a handsome reward being offered, for sending tidings where she might be met with, to an attorney in London. "And now, mother," he continued, "suppose, by hap, this young gentlewoman be she? why you'll be fit to hong yourself, mother! for as to her being so koind to the children, that be no sign; for the bad ones be oftentimes the koindest."

He then enquired whether she had

arrived in a white muslin gown, and a white chip-hat.

Her gown might be white muslin, the mother answered, for aught she could say to the contrary, for it was covered almost all round by a blue striped apron; but as to her hat, it was nothing but a straw-bonnet as coarse and ordinary as he might wish to set eyes on.

O then, he said, it was clear it could not be she, for she was not a person to wear a blue apron; she had been seen, the very night she made off, dressed quite genteel.

What now was the consternation of Juliet, to find herself thus pursued as a run-away, and stigmatized as a swindler and an impostor! Astonishing destiny! she cried; for what am I reserved? O when may I cast off this veil of humiliating concealment? when meet unappalled the fair eye of open day? when appear,—when alas!—even know what I am!

This, however, was not the end: it soon seemed scarcely the beginning of new

distress, so far more deeply terrible to her was the intelligence by which it was followed. When the women demanded where he had heard this news, he answered, at the public-house; where he was told that all Salisbury was in an uproar; a rich outlandish Mounseer, in a post-chaise, having just come to the great inn, with the advertisement in his hand, pointing to the reward, and promising, in pretty good English, to double it, if the person should be found.

Not another word could Juliet hear; not an instant, not a thought could she bestow to learn further what was past, or even to gather what was passing; the future, the dread of what was to come, took sole possession of her feelings and her faculties, and again to fly, more rapidly, more eagerly, more affrighted than ever, to fly, was her immediate act, rather than resolution.

She accoutred herself, therefore, in all that was most homely of her new

apparel; made a packet of what remained of her genuine attire; left half-a-guinea open upon a little table, to avoid again the accusation of being a swindler; and then, descending the ladder, and contriving to hide her bundle with her blue apron, as she passed, said that she was going to walk in the neighbouring fields, but that it was too late to take out the children; and, giving to each of them a penny, to buy cakes, she quitted the cottage.

Without an instant, without even any powers for reflection, she darted across the fields, gained the road, and, within twenty minutes, arrived at an entrance into the New Forest; to which she had already learnt the way in her rambles with the children.

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE terrified eagerness with which Juliet sought personal security, made her enter the New Forest as unmoved by its beauties, as unobservant of its prospects, as the "Dull Incurious *," who pursue their course but to gain the place of their destination; unheeding all they meet on their way, deaf to the songsters of the wood, and blind to the pictures of "God's Gallery †," the country.

Her steps had no guide but fear, which winged their flight; she sought no route but that which seemed most private. She flew past, across, away from the high road, without daring to raise her eyes, lest her sight should be blasted by the view of her dreaded pursuer.

But speed which surpasses strength

* Thomson. † Twining.

must necessarily be transitory. Her feet soon failed; she panted for breath, and was compelled to stop. Fearfully, then, she glanced her eyes around. Nothing met them but trees and verdure. Again she blessed Heaven, and ventured to seat herself upon the "wild fantastic roots" of an aged beech-tree.

Here, far removed from the "busy hum of man," from all public roads; not even a beaten path within view; not a sheep-walk, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage to be discerned; nor a single domestic animal to announce the vicinity of mortal habitation; here, she began to hope that she had parried danger, escaped detection, and reached a spot so secluded, that all probability of pursuit was at an end.

With this flattering idea the freedom of her respiration returned: they will go on, she thought, from stage to stage, from mile-stone to mile-stone; they will never imagine I should dare thus to turn aside from the public way; or,

should any unfortunate circumstance lead them to such a surmise, how many chances, how many thousand chances are in my favour, that they may not fix upon exactly the same direction, as that to which accident, alone, has been my guide into the mazes of this intricate forest!

This belief sufficed to attract back to her willing welcome, that invincible foe to helpless despondency, Hope; whose magic elasticity waits not for reason; consults not with probability; weighs not contending arguments for settling its expectations, or regulating its desires; but, airy, blyth, and bright, bounds over every obstacle that it cannot conquer.

To find some humble dwelling, by travelling on still further from the towns in which she had been seen, was her immediate project; but prudence forbade her seeking the asylum with Dame Fairfield which she had pleased herself with thinking secured, lest her arrival should

be preceded by an accusing, or followed by a dangerous report from her hostess of Salisbury. She determined, therefore, to hide herself under some obscure roof, where she might be utterly unknown; and there to abide, till the fury of the storm by which she feared to be overtaken, should be passed.

No sooner were her spirits, in some degree, calmed, than, with the happy promptitude of youth to set aside evil, all personal fatigue was insensibly forgotten; her eyes began to recover their functions; and the moment that she cast them around with abated anxiety, she was so irresistibly struck with the prospect, and invigorated by the purity of the ambient air, which exhaled odoriferous salubrity, that, rising fresh as from the balmy restoration of undisturbed repose, she mounted a hillock to take a general survey of the spot, and thought all paradise was opened to her view.

The evening was still but little advanced; the atmosphere was as serenely

clear, as the beauties which met her sight were sublimely picturesque; and the gay luxuriance of the scenery, though chastened by loneliness and silence, invited smiling admiration. Chiefly she was struck with the noble aspect of the richly variegated woods, whose aged oaks appeared to be spreading their venerable branches to offer shelter from the storms of life, as well as of the elements, charming her imagination by their lofty grandeur; while the zephyrs, which agitated their verdant foliage, seemed but their animation. Soon, however, all observation was seized and absorbed by the benignant west, where the sun, with glory indescribable and ever new, appeared to be concentrating its refulgence, to irradiate the world with its parting blessing: while the extatic wild notes, and warbling, intuitive harmony of the feathered race, struck her ear as sounds celestial, issuing from the abode of angels; or to that abode chanting invitation.

Here, for the first time, she ceased to sigh for social intercourse: she had no void, no want; her mind was sufficient to itself; Nature, Reflection, and Heaven seemed her own! Oh Gracious Providence! she cried, supreme in goodness as in power! What lesson can all the eloquence of rhetoric, science, erudition, or philosophy produce, to restore tranquillity to the troubled, to preserve it in the wise, to make it cheerful to the innocent, — like the simple view of beautiful nature? so divine in its harmony, in its variety so exquisite! Oh great Creator! beneficent! omnipotent! thy works and religion are one! Religion! source and parent of resignation! under thy influence how supportable is every earthly calamity! how supportable, because how transitory becomes all human woe, where heaven and eternity seem full in view!

Thus, in soul-expanding contemplation, Juliet composed her spirits and recruited her strength, while she awaited

the dusky hue of twilight to discover some retreat; and not without reluctance she then quitted the delicious spot, where her weary mind and body had been alike refreshed with repose and consolation.

Though too much occupied by the certain and cruel danger from which she was running, to bestow much attention upon the uncertain, yet immediate and local risks to which she might be liable, she was not, now, sorry to regain a beaten track, of which the rugged ruts shewed the recent passage of a rural vehicle.

In a few minutes, she descried a small cart, directed by a man on foot, who was jovially talking with some companion.

While seeking to discover whether their appearance were such as might encourage her to ask their assistance upon her way, she was startled with a cry of "Why if there ben't Deb. Dyson! O the jeade! if I ben't venged of un! a

would no' know me this very blessed morning!"

"Deb. Dyson?" answered the other: "no, a be too slim for Debby. Debby'd outweigh the double o' un."

"O, belike I do no' know Deb. Dyson?" cried the carter, "Why I zee her, at five of the clock, at her own door, in that seame bonnet. And I do know her bonnet of old, for t' be none so new; for I was by when Johnny Ascot gin it her, at our fair, two years agone. I know un well enough, I va'nt me! A can make herself fat or lean as a wull, can Debby. A be a funny wench, be Debby. But a shall peay me for this trick, I van't me, a jeade!"

Juliet, in the utmost alarm to find herself thus recognised by the carter, though still supposed to be another, hastily glided back to the wood; cruelly vexed that the very disguise which had hitherto saved her from personal discovery, exposed her but additionally to another species of peril. She might

easily, indeed, by speaking, or by suf-fering herself to be looked at, shew the carter his mistake in conceiving her to be of his acquaintance; but there would still remain a dangerous appear-ance of intimacy with a young woman who was evidently held in light estima-tion. She quickened, therefore, her pace, and determined to relinquish her suspicious bonnet by the first oppor-tunity.

In a short time the cackling of fowls, and other sounds of rural animation, announced the vicinity of some inhabited spot. She pursued this unerring direc-tion, and soon saw, and entered, a small hut; in which, though the whole dimen-sions might have stood in a corner of any large hall, without being in the way, she found a father, mother, and seven young children at supper.

Their looks, upon her entrance, were by no means auspicious; the woman scowled at her with an eye of ill will; the man harshly asked what she wanted;

the children, who seemed ravenous, squalled and squabbled for food; and a fierce dog, quitting a half-gnawn bone, to bark vociferously, seemed panting for a sign to leap at and bite her; as a species of order to which he was accustomed upon the intrusion of a stranger.

Juliet told them that she was going to a neighbouring village; but that she had missed her road, and, as it was growing dark, had stopt to beg a night's lodging.

They answered morosely that they had neither bed nor room for travellers.

Was there any house in the neighbourhood where she could be accommodated?

Aye, there was one, they answered, not afar off, where an old man and his wife had a spare bed, belonging to their son: but the direction which they gave was so intricate that, in the fear of losing her way, or again encountering the carter, she entreated permission to sit up in the kitchen.

They went on with their supper, now

helping, and now scolding their children, and one another, without taking any notice of this request.

To quicken their attention she put half-a-crown upon the table.

The man and woman both rose, bowing and courtsying, and each offering her their place, and their repast; saying it should go hard but they would find something upon which she might take a little rest.

She felt mortified that so mercenary a spirit could have found entrance in a spot which seemed fitted to the virtuous innocence of our yet untainted first parents; or to the guileless hospitality of the poet's golden age. She was thankful, however, for their consent, and partook of their fare; which she found, with great surprize, required not either air or exercise to give it zest: it consisted of scraps of pheasant and partridge, which the children called *chicky biddy*; and slices of such fine-grained mutton, that she could with difficulty persuade herself that she was not eating venison.

All else that belonged to this rustic regale gave a surprize of an entirely different nature; the nourishment was not more strikingly above, than the discourse and general commerce of her new hosts were below her expectations. They were rough to their children, and gross to each other; the woman looked all care and ill humour; the man, all moroseness and brutality.

Safety, at this moment, was the only search of Juliet; yet, little as she was difficult with respect to the manner of procuring it, she did not feel quite at ease, when she observed that the man and his wife spoke to each other frequently apart, in significant whispers, which evidently, by their looks, had reference to their guest.

Nevertheless, this created but a vague uneasiness, till the children were put to bed; when the man and woman, having given Juliet some clothing, and an old rug for a mattrass, demanded whether she were a sound sleeper.

She answered in the affirmative.

They then mounted, by a stair-case ladder to their chamber; but, while they were shutting a trap-door, which separated the attic-story from the kitchen, Juliet caught the words, "You've only to turn the darkside of your lanthorn, as you pass, mon, and what can a zee then?"

She was now in a consternation of a sort yet new to her. What was there to be seen?—What ought to be hidden?—Where, she cried, have I cast myself! Have I fallen into a den of thieves?

Her first impulse was to escape; and the moment that all was still over her head, she stept softly to the door, guided by the light of the moon, which gleamed through sundry apertures of an old board, that was placed against the casement as a shutter: but the door was locked, and no key was hung up; nor was any where in sight.

This extraordinary caution in cot-

tagers augmented her alarm. She had, however, no resource but to await the dark lanthorn with steadiness, and to collect all her courage for what might ensue.

She sat upright and watchful, till, by the calculations of probability, she conceived it to be about three o'clock in the morning. Lulled, then, by a hope that her fears were groundless, she was falling insensibly into a gentle slumber; when she was aroused by a step without, followed by three taps against the window, and a voice that uttered, in low accents, "Make heaste, or 'twull be light o'er we be back."

The upper casement was then opened, and the host, in a gruff whisper, answered, "Be still a moment, will ye? There be one in the kitchen."

Great as was now the affright of Juliet, she had the presence of mind to consider, that, whatever was the motive of this nocturnal rendezvous, it was undoubtedly designed to be secret; and

that her own safety might hang upon her apparent ignorance of what might be going forward.

To obviate, therefore, more effectually any surmize of her alarm, she dropt softly upon the rug, and covered herself with the clothing provided by her hostess.

She had barely time for this operation before the trap-door was uplifted, and gently, and without shoes, the man descended. He crossed the room cautiously, unbolted and unlocked the door, and shut himself out. Immediately afterwards, the woman, with no other drapery than that in which she had slept, quickly, though with soft steps, came to the side of the rug, and bent over it for about a minute; she then rebolted and locked the door, returned up the ladder, and closed the trap-opening.

Juliet, though dismayed as much as astonished, forbore to rise, from ignorance, even could she effect her escape, by what course to avoid encountering

the persons whom she meant to fly, in a manner still more dangerous than that of awaiting their return to their own abode; whence she hoped she might proceed quietly on her way the next morning, as an object not worth detention or examination; her homely attire, and laborious manner of travelling alike announcing profitless poverty.

Her doubts of the nature of what she had to apprehend, were as full of perplexity as of inquietude. Would robbers thus eagerly have caught at half-a-crown? Would they be residents in a fixed abode, with a family of children? Surely not. Yet the whispers, the cautions, the examination whether she slept, evinced clearly something clandestine; and their looks and appearance were so darkly in their disfavour, that, ultimately, she could only judge, that, if they were not actual robbers, they were the occasional harbourers, and miserable accomplices of those who, to similar want of principle, joined the necessary

hardiness for following that brief mode of obtaining a livelihood; brief not alone in its success, but in its retribution!

In a state of disturbance so singular, there was not much danger that she should find herself surprised by

"Kind nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep."*

In less than an hour, three taps again struck her ear, though not upon her own casement; taps so gentle, that had she been less watchful, they would not have been heard.

The woman instantly descended the ladder, and approached the bedding; over which she leant as before; and, as before, concluded stillness to be sleep. Cautiously, then, she unbolted and unlocked the door; when, low as were the whispers that ensued, Juliet distinguished three different tones of voice, though she caught not a word that was uttered.

* Young.

The woman next, gliding across the room, opened a low door, which Juliet had not remarked. The man followed slowly, and as if heavily loaded; the woman shut him out by this private door, and returned to fasten that of public entrance; whispering "Good bye!" to some one who seemed to be departing. Juliet, at the same time, heard something fall, or thrown down, from within, weighty, and bearing a lumpish sound that made her start with horrour.

This involuntary and irresistible movement was immediately perceived by the hostess, who was re-crossing the room; but who, then, precipitately advanced to the bedding, and roughly demanded whether she slept?

Juliet struggled vainly to resume her serene appearance of repose; the shock of her nerves had mounted to her features; she felt her lips quiver, and her bosom heave; but she had still sufficient presence of mind to conceal her face by rubbing her eyes, while she asked whether it were time to breakfast?

Satisfied by this enquiry, the woman answered No; and that she had only gotten up to let in her husband, who had been abroad upon a little job, for which he had not found leisure in the day: she recommended to her, therefore, to lie still, and fall asleep.

Still, she remained; but sleep was as far from her eyes, as, in such a situation, from her wishes. She sought, however, again to wear its semblance, while the woman followed her husband through the small door, and shut herself, also, out.

They continued together about half an hour, when, re-entering, they both re-mounted the ladder; without further examination whether or not they were observed.

What might this imply? Was it simply that, concluding her to be awake, they deemed caution to be unavailing? or, that their secret business being finished, caution was no longer necessary?

Strange, also, it appeared to her, their rustic life and residence considered, that they should take such a season for rest, when she saw the vivid rays of the early sun piercing, through various crevices, into the apartment.

Raising her head, next, to view the door, which, the preceding night, had escaped her notice, she espied, close to its edge, a large clot of blood.

Struck with terrour, she started up; and then perceived that the passage from door to door was traced with bloody spots.

She remained for some minutes immovable, incapable either to think of her danger, or to form any plan for her preservation; and wholly absorbed by the image which this sight presented to her fears, of some victim to murderous rapacity.

Soon, however, rousing to a sense of her own situation, she determined upon making a new attempt to escape. She listened beneath the trap-door, to ascer-

tain that all was quiet, and received the most unequivocal assurances, that fatigue and watchfulness had ended in sound sleep. Still, however, she could find no key; but, while fearfully examining every corner, she remarked that the low door was merely latched.

Should she here seek some out-let? She recoiled from the sight of the blood; yet it was a sight that redoubled her earnestness to fly. Whatever had been deposited would certainly be concealed: she resolved, therefore, to make the experiment, though her hand shook so violently, that, more than once, it dropt from the latch ere she could open the door.

Tremblingly she then crossed the threshold, and found herself in a miserable outer-building, without casements, and encumbered with old utensils and lumber. She observed a large cupboard which was locked, but of which, from the darkness of the place, she could take no survey. To the outward door

there was no lock, but it was doubly bolted. She opened it, though not without difficulty, and saw that it led to a small disorderly garden, which was hedged round, half planted with potatoes, and half wasted with rubbish. She examined whether there were any opening by which she might enter the Forest; and discerned a small gate, over which, though it was covered with briars, she believed that she could scramble.

Nevertheless, she hesitated; she might be heard, or presently missed and pursued; and the vengeance incurred by such a detection of her suspicions and ill opinion, might provoke her immediate destruction. It might be better, therefore, to return; to rise only when called; to pay them another half-crown; and then publicly depart.

Accidentally, while thus deliberating, she touched the handle of a large wicker-basket, and found that it was wet: she held out her hand to the light, and saw that it was besmeared with blood.

She turned sick; she nearly fainted; she shrunk from her hand with horrour; yet strove to recover her courage, by ejaculating a fervent prayer.

To re-enter the house voluntarily, was now impossible; she shuddered at the idea of again encountering her dreaded hosts, and resolved upon a flight, at all risks, from so fearful a dwelling.

She made her way through the enclosure; crossed the briery gate, and, rushing past whatever had the appearance of already trodden ground, dived into a wood; where, trampling down thorns, brambles, and nettles, now braving, now unconscious of their stings, she continued her rapid course, till she came within view of a small cottage. There she stopt; not for repose; her troubled mind kept her body still insensible to weariness; but to ponder upon her dreadful suspicions.

Not a moment was requisite to satisfy her upright reason, that to discover what she had seen, and what she surmised, was

an immediate duty to the community, if, by such a discovery, the community might be served; however repugnant the measure might be to female delicacy; however cruel to the pleadings of compassion for the children of the house; and however adverse to her feelings, to denounce what she could not have detected, but from seeking, and finding, a personal asylum in distress.

Yet who was she who must give such information? Anonymous accusation might be neglected as calumnious; yet how name herself as belonging to the noble family from which she sprung, but by which she was unacknowledged? How, too, at a moment when concealment appeared to her to be existence, come forward, a volunteer to public notice? Small as ought to be the weight given to a consideration merely selfish, if opposing the rights of general security; neither law, she thought, nor equity, demanded the sacrifice of private and bosom feelings, for an evil already

irremediable, where, while the denuncia-tion would be unavailing, the denun-ciator must be undone.

Appeased thus for the moment, though not satisfied in her scruples, she walked on towards the dwelling; but, seeing that it was still shut up, she seated herself upon the stump of a large tree, where deaf, from mental occupation, to the wild melody of innumerable surround-ing singing birds, she shudderingly, and without intermission, bathed her bloody hand in the dew.

Rest, however, to her person, served but to quicken the energy of her facul-ties; and the less her fears, the more her judgment prevailed. Her reasoning, upon examination, she found to be plau-sible but fallacious. The evil already committed, it was, indeed, too late to obviate; but if the wretched hut, from which she had just escaped, were the receptacle of nocturnal culprits, or of their victims, there might not be a moment to lose to prevent some new and horrible catastrophe.

In a dilemma thus severe, between the terrour of exposing herself to the personal discovery which she was flying to avoid, or the horrour of omitting the performance of a public duty; she had fixed upon no positive measure, decided upon nothing that was satisfactory, before the casements of the cottage were opened.

Not to lose, then, another moment in unprofitable deliberation, she resolved to communicate to the inhabitants her suspicions, and to urge their being made known to the nearest Justice of the Peace. She might then, with less scruple, continue her flight; and hereafter, if, unhappily, there should be no other alternative, give her assistance in following up the investigation.

She tapped at the cottage-door, and demanded admittance and rest, as a weary traveller.

She was let in, without difficulty, by an old woman, who was breakfasting with an old man, upon a rasher of bacon.

It now, with much alarm, occurred to her, that this might be the house to which she had been directed from the terrible hut. She fearfully enquired whether they had a spare bed? and, upon receiving an answer in the affirmative, with the history of their son's absence, not a doubt remained that she had sought refuge with the friends, perhaps the accomplices, of the very persons from whom she was escaping; and who, should they, through vengeful apprehension, pursue her, would probably begin their search at this spot.

Affrighted at the idea, yet not daring abruptly to abscond, she forced herself to sit still while they breakfasted; though unable to converse, and turning with disgust from the sight of food.

The old man and woman, meanwhile, intent solely upon their meal, which, now too hot for their mouths, now too cold for their taste, now too hard for their teeth, occupied all their discourse; heeded not her uneasiness, and, when

she arose and took leave, saw her departure with as little remark as they had seen her entrance.

With a complication of fears she now went forth again; to seek,—not an asylum in the Forest, the beautiful Forest!—but the road by which she might quit it with the greatest expedition. Where, now, was the enchantment of its prospects? Where, the witchery of its scenery? All was lost to her for pleasure, all was thrown away upon her as enjoyment; she saw nothing but her danger, she could make no observation but how to escape what it menaced.

She flew, therefore, from the vicinity of the hut, though with a celerity better adapted to her wishes than to her powers; for, in less than half an hour, she was compelled, from utterly exhausted strength, to seat herself upon the turf.

Not yet was she risen, and scarcely was she rested, when she was startled by a whistling in the wood, which was pre-

sently followed by the sound of two youthful male voices, in merry converse.

To escape notice, she, at first, thought it safest to sit still; but the nearer and nearer approach of feet, made her reflect, that to be surprised, in so unfrequented a spot, at so early an hour in the morning, might be yet more unfavourable to opinion, than being discerned to pace her lonely way, with the quick steps of busy haste, or timid caution. She moved, therefore, on; carefully taking a contrary direction to that whence the voices issued.

She soon found herself bewildered in a thicket, where she could trace no path, and whence she could see no opening. She was felicitating herself, however, that she had out-run the sounds by which she had been affrighted; when she first heard, and next perceived, an immense dog, who, after beating about the bushes at some distance, suddenly made a point at her, and sprang forward.

Terrour, which puts us into any state but that which is natural, bestows, occasionally, what, in common, it robs us of, presence of mind. Juliet knew that flight, to the intelligent, though dumb friend of man, was well seen to be cowardice, and instinctively judged to be guilt. Aware, therefore, that if she could not appease his fury, it were vain to attempt escaping it, she compelled herself to turn round and face him; holding out her hand in a caressing attitude, that seemed inviting his approach; though with difficulty sustaining herself upon her feet, from a dread of being torn to pieces.

The rage, unprovoked, but not inexorable, of the animal, withstood not this manifestation of kindness: from a pace so rapid, that it seemed menacing to level her with the earth by a single bound, he abruptly stopt, to look at and consider his imagined enemy; and from a barking, of which the stormy loudness resounded through the forest, his tone

changed to a low though surly growl, in which he seemed to be debating with himself, whether to attack a foe, or accept a friend.

The hesitation sufficed to ensure to Juliet the victory. Encouraged by a view of success, her address supplanted her timidity, and, bending forwards, she called to him with endearing expressions. The dog, caught by her confidence, made a grumbling but short resistance; and, having first fiercely, and next attentively, surveyed her, wagged his tail in sign of accommodation, and, gently advancing, stretched himself at her feet.

Juliet repaid his trust with the most playful caresses. Good and excellent animal, she cried, what a lesson of mild philanthropy do you offer to your masters! The kindness of an instant gains you to a stranger, though no unkindness, nor even the hardest usage, can alienate you from an old friend!

She now flattered herself that, by

following as he led, she might have a guide, as well as a protector, to the habitation to which he belonged. She sate by his side, determined to wait his movements, and to pursue his course. Perfectly contented himself, he basked in the sun-beams that broke through the thicket, and was evidently soothed, nay, charmed, by the fond accents with which she solicited his friendship.

This nearly silent, but expressive intercourse, was soon interrupted by a vociferous Haloo! from a distant part of the wood.

Up started the new companion of Juliet, who arose, also, to accompany, or, at least, to trace his steps. Neither were possible. He darted from her with the same rapidity, though wide from the same ferocity, as that with which he had at first approached her: vain was every soft appeal, lost was every gentle blandishment; in an instant he was out of sight, out of hearing, — she scarcely saw him go ere he was gone. Faithful crea-

ture! she cried, 'tis surely his master who calls! A new tie may excite his benevolence; none can shake his fidelity, nor slacken his services.

Alone and unaided, she had now to pierce a passage through the thicket, uncertain whither it might lead, and filled with apprehensions.

But, in a few minutes, greatly to her satisfaction, her new friend re-appeared; wagging his tail, rubbing himself against her gown, and meeting and returning her caresses.

Her project of obtaining a conductor was now recurring, when again an Haloo!- followed by the whistling of two voices, called off her hope; and shewed her that her intended protector belonged to the young men whom she had been endeavouring to avoid.

She knew not whether it were better, under the auspices of her new ally, to risk begging a direction from these youths, to some house or village; or still to seek her desolate way alone.

She had time only to start, not to solve this doubt; the dog, again returning, as if unwilling to relinquish his new alliance, began to excite the curiosity of his masters; who, following, exclaimed, "Dash a vound zomething, zure!" and presently, through the trees, she descried two wood-cutters.

She was seen, also, by them; they scrambled faster on; and one of them said,

"Why t'be a girl!"

"Be it?" answered the other; "why then I'll have a kiss."

"Not a fore me, mon!" cried his companion, "vor I did zee her virzt!"

"Belike you did," the other replied; "but I zpoke virzt; zo you mun come after!"

Juliet now saw herself in a danger more dreadful than any to which either misfortune or accident had hitherto exposed her, — the danger of personal and brutal insult. She looked around vainly for succour or redress; the woods and

the heavens were alone within view or within hearing.

The first terrible moment of this alarm was an agony of affright, that made her believe herself a devoted victim to outrage: but the moment after, observing that the young men were beginning to combat for precedence, a sudden hope of escape revived her courage, and gave wings to her feet; and, defying every obstacle, she pushed on a passage, through the intricate thicket, almost with the swiftness that she might have crossed the smoothest plain, till she arrived at an open spot of ground.

The fear of losing her now ended, though without deciding, the dispute; and the youths ran on together, mutually and loudly shouting familiar appeals, after the fugitive, upon their rights, with entreaties that she would stop.

Juliet again felt her strength expiring; but where courage is the result of understanding, if its operation is less immediate than that which springs from

physical bravery, it is not less certain. The despair, therefore, of saving herself by bodily exertion, presently gave rise to a mental effort, which instigated her to turn round upon her persecutors, and await and face them; with the same assumed firmness, though not with the offered caresses, with which she had just encountered her four-footed pursuer.

Their surprize at this unexpected action put an end to their dissention; and, each believing her to be alike at the service of either, or of both, they laughed coarsely, and came on, arm in arm, and leisurely, together.

Juliet, calling to her assistance her utmost presence of mind, and dignity of manner, stept forward to meet them; and, with an air that disguised her apprehensions, said, "Gentlemen, I have business of great importance with the farmer who lives near this place; but I do not know the shortest way to his farm. If you will be so obliging as to

shew it to me, you may depend upon his handsomely rewarding any trouble that you may take."

Their astonishment, now, was encreased; but although, at the word business, they leered at one another with an air of mockery, her air and mien, with her grave civility and apparent trust, caused, involuntarily, a suspension of their facetious design; and they enquired the name of the farmer, whom she was seeking.

She could not immediately, she said, recollect it; but he lived at the nearest farm.

"Why 't-ben't Master Zimmers?" They cried.

"The very same!"

"What, that do live yinder, across the copse?"

"Without any doubt."

They now ogled one another, with a consciousness that persuaded Juliet that this Simmers was their own master; or, perhaps, their father; and she repeated her request, with reiterated assurances,

that a considerable recompence would be bestowed upon her conductor.

They looked irresolute, and extremely foolish; Dash, however, was firmly her friend, and, while they were whispering and hesitating, jumped and capered from his masters to his new associate, from his new associate to his masters, with an intelligent delight, that seemed manifesting his enjoyment of a junction which he had himself brought about.

Juliet shewed so much pleasure in his kindness, that the young men, proud of their dog, and glad, in their embarrassment, to be occupied rather than to reply, fondled him, in their rough manner, themselves; making him fetch, carry, stand on his hinder legs, leap over their hats, caper, bark, point, and display his various accomplishments.

Juliet encouraged this diversion, by patting the dog, applauding his teachers, and stimulating a repetition of every feat; till the youths, charmed by her good fellowship, were insensibly turned aside

motive, the result is nearly universal; that those who approach us with cheerfulness, are sure to be met with kindness. Cheerfulness is as distinct from insipid placidity as from buoyant spirits; it seems to indicate a disposition of thankful enjoyment for all that can be attained of good, blended with resignation upon principle to all that must be endured of evil.

Her first care was to satisfy her two still wondering conductors, who proved to be sons to the master of the farm, by giving to each half-a-crown; that they might not lose their time, she told them, by waiting till she had settled her business with their father: and, after doubling her caresses to her protector, Dash, she sent them back to their work; manifestly glad that they had not affronted a young woman, who knew how to behave herself, they said, so handsomely.

She now begged an audience of the farmer, to whom she resolved to com-

municate her alarming adventure at the hut.

The farmer, who was surrounded by his family and his labourers, to whom he was issuing orders, desired her to speak out at once.

Juliet could by no means consent to publish so dark and uncertain a history to so many hearers; she again, therefore, entreated to address him in private.

He had come home, he answered, only to take a mug of beer; for the plough was in the field: however, she might call again, if she would, at dinner-time; but he had no time to give to talk in a morning.

And forth he went, whistling, and hallooing after his labourers, as he jogged his way.

She then applied to his bustling, sturdy wife; but with no better success; Who was to feed the poultry? who was to give the wash to the pigs? who was to churn the butter? if she threw away her time by gossipping in the morning?

The rest of the family consisted of three grown up daughters, and four or five children. The daughters, though more civil, because less voluntarily busy, and, as yet, less interested than their parents, were too inexperienced to give any assistance, or form any judgment upon such an affair; Juliet, therefore, who was sinking with fatigue and emptiness, and who desired nothing so much as to remain for some time under any safe roof, begged, of the young women, a bason of bread and milk for her breakfast; and permission to stay at the farm till the hour of dinner.

These requests were granted without the smallest demur, even before she produced her purse; which they viewed with no small surprize, saying that they hoped they were not so near, as to take money for a little bread and milk of a traveller; but that, if she must needs do it, she might give a small matter to the children.

Recollecting, now, her rustic and ordinary garb, and fearing to awaken suspicion, or curiosity, she put a penny a-piece into the hands of two little boys and a girl.

It was then that she saw how far she was removed from the capital; in the precincts of which the poor and the labourer are almost constantly rapacious, or necessitous. The high price to be obtained, there, for whatever is marketable, makes generosity demand too great a sacrifice, save from the exalted few; who, still in all places, and in all classes, are, by the candid observer, occasionally, to be found. But in this obscure hamlet, where plenty was not bribed away to sale, this little donation was received with as much amazement as joy; and the children scampered to the dairy, and to the plough-field, to shew it first to mammy, and then to dad.

Juliet, having taken her simple repast, strolled into a small meadow, just without the farm-yard; where she seated her-

self upon a style, to enjoy, at once, the fragrant air, and personal repose.

The prospect here, though less sublime in itself, and less exalting in the ideas which it inspired, than that of the lonely and majestic beauty, which had so powerfully charmed her, visually and intellectually, in the midst of the New Forest; was yet gay, varied, verdant and lovely. On the opposite side of a winding and picturesque road, by which the greater part of the hedge around the meadow was skirted, was situated a small Gothic church; of which the steeple was nearly over-run with ivy, and the porch, half sunk into the ground, from the ravages of time and of neglect; wearing, all together, the air of a venerable ruin. Further on, and built upon a gentle acclivity, stood a clean white cottage, evidently appropriated to the instruction of youth, or rather childhood; to which sundry little boys and girls, each with a book, or with needle-work, in his hand, were trudging with anxious speed. Ju-

liet spoke to each of them as they passed; pleased with their innocent prattle, and gathering alternately, from their native intelligence, or gaping stupidity, food to amuse her mind, with predictions of their future characters. Sheep were browsing upon a distant heath; cows were watering in a neighouring stream; and two beautiful colts were prancing and skipping, with all the bounding vigour of untamed liberty, in the meadow. Geese, turkies, cocks and hens, ducks and pigs, peopled the farm-yard; keeping up an almost constant chorus of rural noises; which, at first, stunned her ears, but which, afterwards, entertained her fancy, by drawing her observation to their various habits and ways. The children came, jumping, to play around her; and her friend Dash, discovering her retreat, frequently left the wood-cutters to bound forwards, and court her caresses.

The young women of the house, to divert their several labours of weeding,

churning, or washing, occasionally, also, joined her, for the pleasure of a little chat; which they by no means, like their father or mother, held in contempt. Juliet received them with an urbanity that gave such a zest to their little visits, that it served to quicken their work, that they might quicken their return; and, with the eldest, she changed the bonnet of Debby Dyson, for one that was plainer, and yet more coarse.

There was nothing in these young persons of sufficient "mark or likelihood" to make them attractive to Juliet; but she was glad to earn their good will; and not sorry to learn what were their occupations; conscious that a dearth of useful resources, was a principal cause, in adversity, of FEMALE DIFFICULTIES.

Here, then, Juliet formed a project to rest, till her own should be removed; or, at least, till she could obtain some intelligence, that might guide her uncertain steps: this seemed the spot upon which

she might find repose; this seemed the juncture for enjoying quiet and tranquillity in the country life; to which she desired to devote the residue of the time that might still be destined to suspense. —Here, retirement would be soothing, and even seclusion supportable, from the charm of the scenery, the beauty of the walks, the guileless characters, and vivifying activity of the inhabitants of the farm-house; and the fragrant serenity of all around. Here, peace and plenty were the result of industry; and primitive, though not polite hospitality, was the offspring of natural trust. If there was no cultivation, there was no art; if there was no refinement, there were integrity and good will.

She applied, therefore, to her new young acquaintances, to promote her plan with their parents. They lost not a moment in making the arrangement; and Juliet was immediately installed in a small chamber, upon the attic-story. She settled that she should eat from

their table, but alone; for she dreaded remark or discovery. No terms were fixed; a little matter, they said, would suffice; and Juliet saw that she had nothing to fear from imposition; every face in the family bearing the mark, or the promise, of steady honesty.

Nor, indeed, could any price be exorbitant to Juliet, that could procure some relief to her fears, and some respite from her toils. Her first care was to obtain, through her new friends, implements for writing; and then to transmit, in detail, assurances of her present safety, and even comfort, to Gabriella; from whom she entreated intelligence, whether pursuit and enquiry were still active.

As fearful, now, of the name of Ellis, as, heretofore, she had been of that of Granville, she desired that the answer might be directed, under cover to "Master Simmers, Farmer, at ——, near the New Forest;" and that the enclosed letter might have no other

address than, "For the young Woman who lodges at the Farm."

Again, then, she returned to the meadow, which, now her mind was more at ease, seemed adorned with added verdure, freshness, and beauty. Here, pensive, yet not without consolation, she past the day.

The next, she rambled a few paces further, and found out a cottage, in a situation of the most romantic loveliness, in which two labourers, and their wives, resided with their mother; a cheerful, pleasing old woman, with whom Juliet was immediately in amity.

She visited, also, the school; made acquaintance with its mistress, who appeared to be a sensible and worthy woman; and captivated the easy hearts of the little scholars, by the playful manner in which she noticed their occupations, encouraged their diligence, and assisted them to learn their lessons.

She aided, also, the young women of the farm, in various of the lighter domes-

tic offices that fell to their share; and amused, at once, and instructed her own mind, by opening a new road for admiration of the wondrous works of the Great Creator, in observing and studying the various animals abounding in and about the farm. The remark and attention of a few days, sufficed to shew her, not only as much difference in the interiour nature of the four-footed and of the plumaged race, as there is in their hides or their feathers; but nearly, or, perhaps, quite as much diversity, in their dispositions, as in those of their haughty human masters; though the means of manifestation bore no comparison. In fixing her attention upon them, in following their motions, and considering their actions; she found that though the same happy instinct guided them all alike to self-preservation, the degrees of skill with which they discovered the shortest and best method for attaining what they coveted, were infinite; yet not more striking than the variety of their humours; kind, complying, generous; or

fierce, selfish, and gloomy, in their intercourse with one another. *Le droit du plus fort*, (the right of strength,) though the most ordinary, was by no means the only, or the universal basis of animal legislation. Dexterity and sagacity find ascendance wherever there is animation: and propensities benign and social, or malignant and savage, as palpably distinguish beast from beast, and bird from bird, as man from his fellow.

What an inexhaustible source was here, to a thinking being, both for information and entertainment! Oh Providence Divine! she cried, how minute is the perfection, yet how grand the harmony of thy works!

Still, however, she sought vainly to obtain the requested conference. The farmer, whose thoughts were absorbed exclusively in the interests of his farm, was always too busy to afford her any time, and too indifferent to give her any attention. As she lodged in the house, he could hear her, he said, when he

should be more at leisure; and all her eloquence was ineffectual, either to awaken his curiosity, or to excite his benevolence, by intimations of the importance, or of the haste, of the business which she wished to communicate. "Ay, girl, ay," he would reply; "by and by will do just as well."

But by and by came not! When she endeavoured to catch a moment, at the hour of breakfast, the whole day, he would cry, was as good as thrown away, if a man lost a moment of his morning: yet if she solicited his hearing in the evening, he would cordially offer her some bread and cheese, and beer; but rise from them himself, heavy and sleepy, to go to bed; saying, "Hark y', my girl; when you've worked as hard as a farmer, you'll be as glad of your night's rest."

If she sought him in the middle of the day, he was always surrounded by his family, and by labourers, from whom he would never step apart; telling her to

speak out what she had to say, and to fear nothing and nobody.

Farming, she soon found, he regarded as the only art of life worth cultivation, or even worth attention; every other seemed to him superfluous or silly. A woman, therefore, as she could neither plough the field, nor mow the corn, he considered as every way an inferiour being: and, like the savages of uncivilised nature, he would scarcely have allowed a female a place at his board, but for the mitigation given to his contempt, from regarding her as the mother of man.

The sex, therefore, of Juliet, was here wholly against her; and youth and beauty, those powerful combatants of misanthropy! were necessarily without influence, where they were never looked at: Could they ripen his corn? or make his hay? No; What then, was their value?

Nevertheless, he treated neither his wife nor his daughters ill; he only considered them as his servants: and when they were diligent and useful, he praised

them and gave them presents; and, when their work was done, suffered them to seek what diversion they pleased, without interference or controul. The females were indifferent, and therefore contented; though neither confidential nor affectionate.

The sons, on the contrary, were open, boisterous, and daring; domineering over their sisters, and mocking their mother; while they nearly shared, with their partial father, both his authority and his profits.

In a family such as this, Juliet had no chance of softening the languor of her suspense by society; and books, its best substitute, had never found their way into the farm-house; save an odd volume or two of trials, sundry tracts upon farriery, and various dismal old ballads.

The first charm of this rural residence, consisting in its views and its walks, soon lost something of its animation to Juliet, through the restriction of fear, which impeded her from roving

beyond the neighbourhood of the farm. And though the beautiful prospect from the meadow, and the air and exercise of mounting to the school, might permanently have afforded her delight, if shared with some loved friend, or enjoyed with some good author; she became, in a short time, through the total deprivation of either, nearly as languid from monotony without, as she was wearied by ungenial intercourse within.

On Sunday, after they had all been to church, the young women proposed to accompany her in a stroll; and the hope of a romantic ramble without danger, induced her acceptance of the invitation. This, however, was an essay which she did not feel tempted to repeat. She found that their only idea of taking a stroll, was to get away from home; and their only object of pursuit, was to encounter their several sweethearts. They walked not for exercise; they had more than enough in their daily occupations. They walked not for air; they

rarely spent an hour of the day under shelter. They walked still less in search of rural views, or picturesque beauties; they saw them not; or, rather, they saw them too constantly to heed them. Their chosen scene was the high road; along which they leisurely, but merrily sauntered, to enjoy,—not the verdure of the adjacent fields, or wood; not the freshness of the salubrious breeze; not the charm, here and there occasionally bursting upon the sight, of sloping hills, or flowery dales; but to watch for every distant cloud of rising dust, that announced, or that promised the approach of a horse, cart, or waggon.

What, to these, was the pleasure of situation? Juliet saw, with concern, that all which, to herself, would have solaced a similar way of life, to them was null. Accustomed from their infancy to beautiful scenery, they looked at it as a thing of course, without pleasure or admiration; because without that which fixes all worldly acceptation of happiness,—comparison.

The mother, whose existence, from the fear and from the commands of her husband, was laborious; and, from her own love of saving, penurious; had scarcely even any idea of pleasure, beyond what accrued from feeding her rabbits, fattening her hogs, and carrying her eggs and poultry to a good market.

The farmer, whose will had no controul, either from himself or his family; and who indulged his own humours in the same proportion that he kept theirs in awe, had yet a master; and a master more despotic and ungovernable than himself,—the Weather! to whose power, however, he by no means submitted tamely. The whole house rang with the violence of his rage, if the rain fell while his hay were cutting or stacking; and he could scarcely swallow his dinner for chagrin, if it failed to fall when his peas wanted filling: his imprecations were those of a man provoked by the grossest personal injury,

if a sharp wind came not at his bidding, when he perceived insects crawling upon the leaves of his fruit-trees in the orchard; and his whole family trembled, as if immediate ruin, or an earthquake were impending, when he claimed, and claimed in vain, the sun to ripen his corn.

Juliet now found, that a farmer is sensible to no happiness, that a gust of wind, a shower of rain, or the beams of the sun; as they meet, or oppose, his wishes; does not confirm, or may not destroy.

The storms, nevertheless, raised by this man of the elements, were from causes too obvious to create surprize; and they were known to be too harmless in their operations, to occasion any other movement in his household, than that of a general struggle which should first get out of his way till they were blown over: but, to a stranger, to Juliet, they were more tremendous, because as foreign to the habits of her life, as they were ungenial to her nature. To change

therefore, a scene so continually overcast, she took leave of the family, thankfully repaying the services which she had received; and left the farm, to lodge herself with the pleasing old woman, who had won her favour, in the beautifully picturesque cottage in the neighbourhood.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

IN this cottage, Juliet, again, witnessed another scene of life; and one which, serene and soothing, appeared, upon its opening, to exclude all evil.

The dwelling of the shepherd, or husbandman, had already in its favour the imagery of poesy, and the ardent predilection of juvenile ideas; and, with the vivacity of a heart always open to hope, Juliet hailed in it, at once, tranquillity and contentment.

Paid for his work by the day, the labourer had no anxiety for the morrow; the ground he was to plough, or till, or sow, was not his own; the goodness, badness, and variations of the weather touched not his property, nor endangered his subsistence. Be the seasons, therefore, what they might, he was not to be pitied.

Yet though his sound repose, the fruit of his toil, was undisturbed by elemental strife, he waked not to active hope; he looked not forward to sanguine expectation: the changes which could do him no mischief, could not bring him any advantage. No view of amelioration to his destiny enlivened his prospect; no opening to better days spurred his industry; and, as all action is debased, or exalted, by its motive; and all labour, by its object; those who struggle but to eat and sleep, may be saved from solicitude, but cannot be elevated to prosperity. He could not, therefore, be envied.

Two of the young men were married, and their wives, strong and healthy like themselves, worked almost as laboriously. Juliet found them as worthy as they were industrious; and hoped, by exciting their kindness, to add the interest of gentle amity to peace and rural enjoyment. But, though pleased and satisfied with their characters, and honouring their active and useful lives, she sought vainly

to content herself with their uncultured society; and soon saw, with regret, how much the charm, though not the worth, of innocence depends upon manners; of goodness, upon refinement; and of honesty upon elevation. There was much to merit her approbation; but not a point to engage her sympathy; and, where the dominion of the character falls chiefly upon the heart, life, without sympathy, is a blank. The unsatisfied soul sighs for communion; its affections demand an expansion, its ideas, a developement, that, instinctively, call for interchange; and point out, that solitude, sought only by misery, remorse, or misanthropy, is as ungenial to our natural feelings, as retirement is salubrious.

She had here time and opportunity to see the fallacy, alike in authors and in the world, of judging solely by theory. Those who are born and bred in a capital; who first revel in its dissipations and vanities, next, sicken of its tumults

and disappointments, write or exclaim for ever, how happy is the country peasant's lot! They reflect not that, to make it such, the peasant must be so much more philosophic than the rest of mankind, as to see and feel only his advantages, while he is blind and insensible to his hardships. Then, indeed, the lot of the peasant might merit envy!

But who is it that gives it celebrity? Is it himself? Does he write of his own joys? Does he boast of his own contentment? Does he praise his own lot? No! 'tis the writer, who has never tried it, and the man of the world who, however murmuring at his own, would not change with it, that give it celebrity.

Though natively endowed with that first, perhaps of worldly blessings, high animal spirits, Juliet, from an early experience of the vicissitudes of fortune, was become meditative. She looked with an intelligent desire of information, upon every new scene of life, that was presented to her view; and every class of society,

that came within her knowledge: she now, therefore, with equal clearness and concern, saw how false an idea is conceived, at a distance, not only of the shepherd's paradise, but of the general happiness of the country life; — save to those who enjoy it with a large family to bring up; or with means not alone competent to necessity, but to benevolence; which not alone give leisure for the indulgence of contemplation, and the cultivation of rural taste, of literature, and of the fine arts; but which supply means for lightening the labours, and softening the hardships of the surrounding poor and needy. Then, indeed, the country life is the nearest upon earth, to what we may conceive of joys celestial!

The verdure of the flower-motleyed meadow; the variegated foliage of the wood; the fragrance and purity of the air, and the wide spreading beauties of the landscape, charm not the labourer. They charm only the enlightened rambler, or affluent possessor. Those who toil,

heed them not. Their eyes are upon their plough; their attention is fixed upon the harvest; their sight follows the pruning hook. If the vivid field catches their view, it is but to present to them the image of the scythe, with which their labour must mow it; if they look at the shady tree, it is only with the foresight of the ax, with which their strength must fell it; and, while the body pants but for rest, which of the senses can surrounding scenery, ambient perfumes, or vocal warblers, enchant or enliven?

Juliet now, herself an inhabitant of the cottage, which, hitherto, she had only beheld in perspective, smiled, yet sighed at her mistake, in having considered shepherds and peasants as objects of envy. O ye, she cried, who view them through your imaginations! were ye to toil with them but one week! to rise as they rise, feed as they feed, and work as they work! like mine, then, your eyes would open; you would no longer

judge of their pleasures and luxuries, by those of which they are the instruments for yourselves! you would feel and remark, that yours are all prepared for you; and that they, the preparers, are sufferers, not partakers! You would see then, as I see now, that the most delightful view which the horizon can bound, affords not to the poor labourer the joy that is excited by the view of the twilight through which it is excluded; but which sends him home to the mat of straw, that rests, for the night, his spent and weary limbs.

Then, as she looked around, from the summit of the hill upon which stood the small seminary for children, which she frequently visited, Oh that Elinor, she cried, escaping from the pressure of her passions, would expand her feelings by contemplating the works of God! Oh Father of All! — Who can reflect, yet doubt, that Man, placed at the head of these stupenduous operations, lord of the earthly sphere, can fail to be des-

tined for Immortality? Yet more, who can examine and meditate upon the uncertain existence of thy creatures, — see failure without fault; success without virtue; sickness without relief; oppression in the very face of liberty; labour without sustenance; and suffering without crime;—and not see, and not feel that all call aloud for resurrection and retribution! that annihilation and injustice would be one! and that Man, from the very nature of his precarious earthly being, must necessarily be destined, by the All Wise, and All Just, for regions that we see not; for purposes that we know not; — for Immortality!

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

THUS, in beautiful scenery, and meditative resignation, with outward quiet, though by no means with internal tranquillity, Juliet had passed about a week, when the wife of the farmer broke rudely into the cottage; bearing in her hand the bonnet of Debby Dyson, which she flung scornfully upon a table.

Angrily, then, reproaching Juliet that she had caused Bet to be taken for that bold hussy, by the higler, she demanded back the exchanged bonnet; declaring, that the girl should never wear one again, to the longest day that she had to live, rather than dress herself up in any thing of Debby Dyson's.

Turning next to the old cottager, she added, that a good mother would do well not to keep a person used to such light

company under her roof; unless she had a mind to bring her daughters-in-law to ruin.

Then, snatching up her girl's bonnet, she bustled away to look after her evening's milking; roughly refusing to hearken to any sort of explanation from Juliet, and saying that she never knew any good come of listening to talking; which was no better than idling away time.

Juliet remained confounded; while the tender old cottager shed tears, saying that she had never before had so pretty a companion in her life. But Juliet would not tempt the good woman to defy the persons upon whom her children chiefly depended; and, once more, therefore, she was reduced to make up her little packet.

She entreated of the cottager that, if a letter came for her to the farm, it might be kept till she sent her direction; then doubled the pay of all that she owed for board and lodging; and, kindly taking

leave of the old dame, who wept bitterly at the parting, quitted the cottage; and again, in search of a new asylum, became a Wanderer.

Which way to turn, she made no enquiry, wholly ignorant what choice might bring security.

It was the end of August, and still not more than six o'clock in the afternoon. She avoided the high road, in the fear of some unfortunate encounter, and went down a pleasant looking lane; purposing to proceed as far, and as fast, as she could go, while it was yet light; and then to enter some new humble dwelling.

The evening was serene and warm, and occasional openings, through the hedges on either side, presented views so picturesque, that, had her mind been more at ease, they would have rendered her walk delightful.

She crossed various corn-fields, and beautiful meadows; but met with no cottage from which some lounging

labourer did not frighten her; till, at length, overtaken by the dusk of the evening, she was fain to turn back, and seek, with whatever apprehension, some lodging, for the night, upon the public road.

But to do this was no longer easy. She mistook what she thought was her direction, and, instead of arriving at the road, found herself upon a broad, open, dreary heath.

She endeavoured to discover the track of some carriage, and succeeded; and followed the mark, till she thought that she perceived a cottage.

She hastened towards it, with all the speed that her wearied limbs would permit; but the expected habitation proved merely a group of Pollards.

She would then have recovered the wheel-track; but the moon became suddenly clouded, a general darkness overspread the face of the country around, and she could discover no kind of path.

She now grew apprehensive that she should pass the night in the open air; with not a human being within hearing, nor any house, nor any succour within reach. What she might have to dread she knew not; but, in a situation so wildly solitary, the very ignorance of what there might be to fear, was intimidating, nay, awful.

The darkness encreased; cautiously and slowly she went on, starting at every breeze, and in continual terrour of meeting some unknown mischief.

She wandered thus for some hours, now sinking into marshy ground, now wounded by rude stones, now upon a soft, smooth plain, and now stung or torn by bushes, nettles, and briars; till she concluded it to be about midnight. A light wind then arose, the clouds were dispersed; and the moon, which, though upon the wane, afforded a gentle, melancholy light, shewed her that she was once again in the midst of the New Forest.

Few sights could have been less welcome; what already she had suffered, and, far more, what she had apprehended, filled her with terrour; and her imagination was fearfully at work, now to bring her to the hut which she had so suspiciously fled; now to the encounter of disorderly young assailants, with no Dash for her protection; now to the attack of lurking thieves, and strolling vagabonds; and now to the danger of being bewildered and lost in the mazes of the Forest.

The last of these evils soon ceased to be a mere phantasm of fear; the wind no sooner was calmed than the moon again was obscured, and all around her was darker, and therefore more tremendous than ever.

She continued to move on, though without knowing whether she were advancing or retrograding. But, ere long, her walk became embarrassed and difficult; her progress was every way obstructed; and her retreat at the same

time impeded; and she found herself in a thick wood, of which the deep hanging boughs continually annoyed her face and her limbs; while the unscythed grass, the growth of ages, entangled her feet, and made every step a labour.

Wearied and dejected, she leaned against a tree, and determined to make no further attempt to proceed, till some gleam of dawn should direct her way.

She had not remained long in this position of despondence, ere she discerned, through the trees, at a considerable distance, a dim light.

She concluded that this must proceed from some dwelling; and, feeling instantly revived, re-commenced her journey: yet, presently, she stopt and hesitated,—it might emit from the hut! In the dead of the night there was little probability that any common cottagers would require a light.

Discomfited, discouraged, she again leaned against a tree.

Yet some one might be ill; and the

chamber of sickness and danger could no more, in the cottage, than in the palace, be consigned to darkness. She determined, therefore, to approach the spot, and, at break of day, to examine the premises; certain she could not ever mistake, or ever forget, the situation of the hut.

She went forward.

The light, in a few moments, disappeared; but she was not, therefore, led to consider it as a Will with the Wisp, to beguile her to some illusion; for, ere it vanished, it displayed, in passing sideways, a view of a cottage double or treble the length of the dreaded hut.

This was a sight truly consoling; yet, though it happily removed the most terrible of her fears, it awakened new perplexity. The light had been evidently without doors: the suggestion, therefore, of a sick chamber proved unfounded. Yet what, in the middle of the night, could replace it, that was natural, and free from suspicion of evil?

Nevertheless, she moved on; seeking to guide herself by the recollection of the spot which she had transiently seen; till she was startled by a murmuring of human voices.

But for the alarm left upon her mind, by the adventure of the hut, and the pursuit of the wood-cutters, this would have been a sound in which her ears would have rejoiced, as the forerunner of succour and of safety; for, till then, she had always connected the idea of rusticity with innocence, and of rural life with felicity. But now, she had fatally learnt, that no class, and no station, appropriatively merit trust; and that the poor, like the rich, the humble, like the proud, can only by principle be worthy of confidence: whether that principle be the happy inherent growth of favouring Providence; or the fruit of religion, and cultivated virtue.

But fear and incertitude, though they slackened, did not long stop her progress: the terrour of her lonely situation

pointed out to her, indeed, the danger of falling into evil hands; yet peremptorily, at the same time, urged her to seek almost any protection, that might rescue her from the vague horrours of this dark and tremendous solitude. It was, at least, possible that these might be the voices of some unfortunate travellers, belated, or lost, like herself, in the Forest. On, therefore, she glided, till she distinguished three different tones, all of which were male, but none of which sounded either youthful or gay. They spoke so low, that not a word reached her ears; nor could she have caught even a sound, but for the total stillness of the air. That they spoke in whispers, therefore, was certain: Was it from fear? Was it from guilt?

The doubt sufficed to check all project of addressing them; but, as she meant to retreat, she trod upon a broken bough of a tree, which made a crackling noise under her feet, that, she had reason to believe, was heard by the

interlocutors, as it was followed by profound silence.

She was now forced to remain immovable; for she felt herself entangled in some of the branches of the bough, and feared that any attempt to dissembarrass herself might cause a new commotion, and point out her position.

She soon became but too certain that she had been heard; for the light reappeared, and she was sufficiently near to observe, that it had been produced by a dark lanthorn, which she now saw turned round, by a man who was evidently seeking to discover whence the noise made by the bough had issued: she saw, also, that he had two companions; but what was her shock when, presently, in one of them, she perceived the master of the hut!

She now gave herself up as lost! Lost alike from his fear of detection, and his vengeance for her escape. To run away was impossible; she could find no path; she could not even venture to stir a

step, lest she should betray her concealment.

They searched, for some time, in different directions; two of them then approached so nearly to the spot upon which she was standing, saying, to each other, that they were sure the sound came from that quarter, that she almost fainted with excess of terrour. But they soon turned off another way; one of them averring that the noise was only from some windfall; and the hut-man replying, in a coarse bass voice, that, if any body were watching, 'twas well they had come no sooner; for he'd defy the sharpest eye living to give a guess, now, at what they had been about.

In this terrible interval, the door of the habitation, of which she had already had a glimpse, was opened by a female; who, depositing a candle upon the threshold, ran up to one of the men, with whom she conversed for a few minutes; after which, saying "Good night!" she re-entered the house; while

the men, all three repeating " Good night!" trudged away, and were soon out of hearing.

Juliet now conceived a hope, that a female, left, probably, alone, might, either through kindness or through interest, be made a friend. She disengaged herself, therefore, from her impediments, and gently tapped at the door.

It was immediately opened by the woman, who said, " Why now, dear me, what have a forgot?" but who no sooner saw a stranger, than she screamed aloud, " La be good unto me! what been ye come for here, at such an untoward time o'night as this be?" while some children who were in bed, and suddenly awakened, jumping upon the ground, clang round their mother, and began crying piteously.

Juliet, more affrighted than themselves, uttered the softest petition, for a few hours' refuge from the dreariness of travelling by night. The woman, then,

casting up her hands in wonder, exclaimed, "Good la! be you only no other but the good gentlewoman that was so koind to my little dearies?"

The children, recollecting her at the same moment, loosened their mother to throw their little arms around their guest; skipping and rejoicing, and crying, "O dood ady! dood ady! it's dood ady!"

This, indeed, was a moment of joy to Juliet, such as life, even at its best periods, can but rarely afford. From fears the most horrible of unknown dangers; and from fatigue nearly insupportable, she found herself suddenly welcomed by trusting kindness. All her dread and scruples, with respect to the Salisbury turnpike hostess, or to any previous reports, were, she now saw, groundless; and she delightedly felt herself in the bosom of security, while encircled in the arms of affectionate and unsuspicious innocence.

The good woman uncovered her hot embers, and put on some fresh wood, to

restore the weary traveller from the chill of the night: and brought out of her cupboard a slice of bacon, and the end of a brown loaf of bread: not mingling, with the warmth of her genuine hospitality, one mistrustful enquiry into the reason of her guest's late wandering, or the cause of her lonely difficulties.

The children with, instinctively, the same sensations, ran about, nearly naked, in search of their homely play-things; persuaded that the "dood ady" would be as pleased as they were themselves, by the sight of the several pieces of broken platter, which they called their tea-things; and a small truss of straw, rolled round with rags, which they denominated their doll. Nor would they return to rest, till Juliet sat down by their side, to tell them some simple stories, of other good boys and girls; while their mother prepared, for the "dood ady," a bed above stairs.

The thankful happiness of Juliet, at a deliverance so unexpected, so sweet, so soothing, induced her cordially to

partake of a repast of which she stood greatly in need; but, before she could mount to the offered chamber, officious doubts and apprehensions broke into the fulness of her contentment, with enquiries: Who might be the men whom she had seen hovering about the house? What might be their business without doors during the dead of the night? What had the man of the hut to do away from his dwelling at such an hour? And why, and for whom, was the good dame herself up so late, without giving any reason for what must necessarily appear so extraordinary?

Bewildered in her ideas, uncertain in her judgment, and fearful how to act, she could not resolve to inhabit a lonely chamber up stairs, at the risk of some fatal surprize, or new danger. She complained of cold, and entreated for leave to sit over the embers; while she begged them, without heeding her, to take their usual repose.

The good woman started not the smallest difficulty; and, placing herself

by the side of the children, in less than three minutes, was visited, like themselves, with the soundest sleep.

This woman, thought Juliet, must be as guileless as she is benevolent, unaccountable as are all the circumstances that hang about her; could she, else, with trust thus facile, taste rest thus undisturbed, in presence of a wandering stranger, known to her only by a small and accidental kindness shewn to her children?

Quieted by this example, Juliet herself, leaning her head against the wall, partook of that common, but ever wonderful oblivion, by which life is recruited, sorrow supported, and care assuaged.

With the first sun-beam they all awoke, and Juliet besought her hostess to accompany her to the nearest town. The good woman cheerfully complied with this request, making no other condition than that of demanding the time to dress and breakfast her bantlings, as she never went any where without them.

Juliet then officiated as nurse to the children: and here, again, the wish of obliging, with the talent of being serviceable, so endeared her to the little ones, and made her so agreeable to their parent, that she was earnestly solicited to remain with them a little longer.

"But, your husband?" Juliet then ventured to ask; "may I not be in his way?"

"O no," the woman answered; "a be gone his rounds; and 't be odds but they do take un, God willing, a week."

This was sufficient encouragement for the harassed Juliet joyfully to accept the invitation for remaining with them a few days. She deposited, therefore, her baggage in the no longer rejected up stairs chamber; and, after a few hours of quiet repose, took the entire charge of the children for the rest of the day; not merely to play with and amuse them, but to work for them. And her industry and adroitness soon put their whole little wardrobe in order; and she fashioned

their clothing to their little shapes, in a manner so neat and commodious, that all that they possessed appeared to them to be new.

The day following, with the same happy skill, she dedicated her time to the service of the mother; whose entreaties grew more and more urgent, that she would prolong her stay at the cottage.

Far was she from desirous to quit it. With repose so much required, she here found comfort, peace, and affection,—three principal ingredients in the composition of happiness! which her mind, in her uncertainty of the fate awaiting her, was delighted to seize, and eager to requite.

For whomsoever, therefore, and at whatsoever she worked, she sung simple songs, or told simple stories, with invariable good humour and pleasantry, to her little friends, who clung to her with passionate fondness; while their enchanted mother thought that some

angel was descended amongst them, in guise of a traveller, to charm and to serve them at once.

To the unhackneyed observation of this good woman, the change of attire in Juliet, since their meeting at Salisbury, offered no sort of food to conjecture; she concluded that to walk about that fine city, had well deserved the best clothes; and that the worst had naturally been put on, afterwards, for economy, upon the road. Juliet found her wholly ignorant of the Salisbury adventure; and filled with innocent gratitude, in concluding that she had been benighted in the Forest, while seeking to find the little dearys whom she had thought so pretty upon the high road.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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